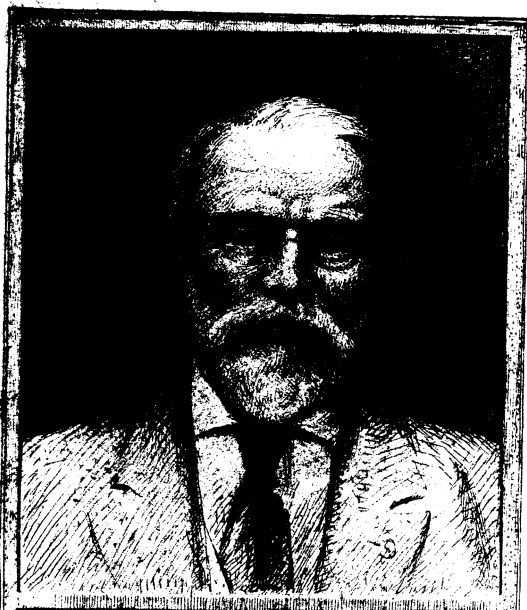


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Tracts

by

William Fox

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I N T E R E S T

O F

G R E A T B R I T A I N ,

R E S P E C T I N G T H E

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B Y W I L L I A M F O X .

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1793.

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AMONGST the peculiar circumstances attending the French revolution; the most interesting, and the most remarkable, is the general horror with which it is viewed by the European Monarchs, and the extensive and powerful combination which has been formed amongst them to suppress it. The terror it has produced seems to have totally absorbed every other consideration, to have united the most discordant interests, destroyed the most inveterate prejudices, and the most violent jealousies. It has even driven the Pope to seek refuge in a nation, which has for more than two centuries had the misfortune to lie under his *interdict*, and to that monarch whose subjects he has most solemnly discharged from their allegiance to him. An investigation into the cause of this political phenomenon may not be uninteresting, even exclusive of the important consequences likely to result from it.

The revolt of subjects against their sovereigns, is not a very rare occurrence; the king of Great Britain has recently experienced an important one, by which he lost the far greater part of his dominions, without exciting any very great concern amongst his fellow monarchs, or any very powerful combination of them in his support. Even republicanism has not heretofore appeared to excite any considerable alarm; *America, Holland, Switzerland*, nay, *England*, in the last century, renounced the authority of their sovereigns, and formed republics, yet the monarchs of Europe abetted their revolt, and fought their alliance. An antipathy to republicanism cannot be pretended, in this case, to be the motive for this confederacy against France, because it existed at a time, when instead of dethroning their monarch, though entirely at their disposal, they voluntarily left him a share of power, dangerous to the safety and peace of the kingdom, and granted him a civil list to the utmost of his desire, and much larger than that enjoyed by the king of England. Far less can the recent cruelties in France be deemed the cause, as those were the effect, and not the cause of the royal confederacy. For when it was first formed, far less blood had been shed in France than in any revolution of equal importance, and a limited monarchy appeared to be peaceably

established. No part of the abhorrence of the French revolution can therefore be attributed to the instability of the government, or the changes it has undergone, because they were the natural consequences of the hostile measures pursued against it. Mr. Pitt acknowledges, that the limited monarchy of France appeared to have been formed with the general concurrence of the people. Had that government then been left undisturbed. Had not the king, the clergy, and nobles of France been tempted by the hope of powerful foreign aid, to endeavour the subversion of the new formed government, its permanency, its peaceable establishment, was far more promising than could reasonably have been expected, from the nature of the convulsion, and the importance of the change which had taken place. All the calamities which have since appeared, and the perilous situation of the royal family of France, may therefore be far more properly attributed to Messrs. *Burke* and *Calonne*, who have been indefatigable in inciting the present clamour, than to the people of France.

At the time these men undertook the horrid task of inciting all Europe against that people, they had declared, that having obtained liberty with the sword, they wished to sheath it for ever. They expressly disclaimed any hostile design on the most defenceless state; they did not appear to entertain any views inimical to the peace of the surrounding nations, nor the least intention of interfering in their concerns. They appeared disposed to sit down peaceably, to enjoy the happiness they expected to derive from the revolution they had effected. To us they were naturally led to look rather as allies, than as enemies; they considered us as the nation in Europe, whose government approximated the nearest to that which they had recently established; and when they saw the continent of Europe arming against them, they threw themselves on our justice, and proffered us the office of mediator: when this was declined, when Mr. Burke was allowed to stigmatize them with impunity, when the French princes were inciting all Europe against them, when almost every European monarch appeared disposed to attack them, and their king was supposed to be em-

ploying the immense revenue they had granted him in supporting these measures, we cannot much wonder at the rage of the French populace or its consequences, nor will any man believe it to be the real reason of any measures which may be adopted against them. Indeed whatever may be the catastrophe of the royal family of France, or whatever may have been its origin, it can hardly be deemed a sufficient cause for deluging Europe in blood. Transitions from the throne to an untimely grave, occur in almost every page of history, they enforce the argument of the moralist, embellish the works of the poet, and form the principle pathos of the drama. *In the space of about half a century the blood of four queens, as beautiful and accomplished as the queen of France, streamed on an English scaffold, and although it was an age of chivalry, not a sword started from its scabbard to avenge them.* Even sovereigns themselves do not in general seem to possess very sympathetic feelings, they rarely concern themselves in the fate of those fellow monarchs, with whom their own interests are not interwoven. The present age has seen a sovereign precipitated from his throne to a prison, and from thence to his tomb; not by injured subjects, but by her whom he had raised to empire, and who now sways the bloody scepter, without having excited those exclamations of horror which seem to have been reserved for the present occasion.

If a regard for the *Bourbons* be not the real motive for this confederacy, far less can we suppose it to be a concern for the people of *France*. Mr. Burke and his associates, indeed, are extremely pathetic in lamenting the misery which they have brought upon themselves. That unhappy people! That miserable, deluded, unfortunate country! are the epithets we apply to France; and it is perhaps the most extraordinary circumstance, in this memorable event, that thirty millions of people should so universally, and so pertinaciously persist in being miserable, and that it should require such very extraordinary means to compel them to be happy. It must be presumed that the illustrious and beneficent monarchs of Russia, of Prussia, and of Austria have placed their own subjects at the summit of happiness, that they are thus so perfectly at leisure to give happiness to the people of another country. And

that the luminous geniuses of Russia of Brandenburg, and of Austria, have set out with swords in their hands to convince the French that they have mistaken the road to felicity, and that the true principles of government, of social order, and national prosperity, are not to be judged of by human reason, but to be adopted from the banks of the Wolga, the Don, and the Oder, where antient and venerable systems of government are established, which were framed by the wisdom of antient times, improved through a succession of ages and sanctioned by happy experience. But however powerfully the Russian, Austrian, and Prussian armies may contend in favor of these systems, it becomes us to pause on the subject, because it is possible the illustrious monarchs may be interested in the question, and some persons may be apt to surmise, that were the misery resulting from the French principles, real, the benevolent monarchs would have left these people undisturbed, to have been as miserable as they pleased, as a terrible example to deter surrounding nations, from subverting antient systems, or rebelling against their dread sovereigns.

Let us then inquire a little into the nature of those principles, which have caused such universal alarm, and threaten such universal mischief. First let us ask what they are? *“ Men being all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of his estate without his own consent, by agreeing with other men to join and unite in a community.—Thus, that which begins, and actually concludes any political society, is nothing but the consent of a number of free men, capable of a majority to unite and incorporate into such society; and this is that, and that only, which did, or could, give beginning to any lawful government.—The supreme power cannot lawfully or rightly take from man, any part of his property without his own consent.—There remains inherent in the people, a power to remove or alter the legislative, when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them; for when such trust is abused, it is thereby forfeited, and devolves to those who gave it.”*

Are these the principles of the French revolution? they are; but they are not extracted from the paltry, blurred, scraps of *the Rights of Man*; they are taken

from the celebrated Mr. Locke's *Treatise on Government*, written avowedly for the purpose of defending the English revolution; and for writing of which, he was rewarded with a *thousand* a year from the British government.

It should seem then that these principles are not quite *new*, that the French philosophers have not *invented* them; they have it seems for a *century* past cursed this country, and now they are fermenting and spreading their baneful effects through *Europe*. It is not then the principles themselves, but it is these principles becoming *French*, which constitutes the danger; while they were confined to this foggy island, while they were locked up in a language almost unknown upon the continent, the monarchs of Europe were either strangers to their existence, or fearless of their effects. But when these principles are adopted by a nation, situated in the midst of happy despotic monarchies; by a nation whose language is the universal language of Europe; and whose writers by their genius, their wit, their learning, and their taste, had almost monopolized the literature of Europe; then it was that these principles excited their alarm, and threatened danger. The French writers have until lately been admired through *Europe*, patronized by *kings* and applauded by *nobles*. Some of them indeed were tinctured with *deism*, some even with *atheism*; but that did not seem much to diminish their celebrity, or draw down the indignation of the *monarchs* and *nobles* of *Europe*. But when these writers adopted the principles of Mr. *Locke*, when these principles began to operate, when the state of France threatened an extensive circulation of them. Then the alarm commenced; then it was discovered that the only writers in *Europe*, who were universally read, were a set of unhappy, miserable philosophers. That the only literary nation on the continent, were inadequate judges of their own happiness, and that it was requisite to send them *Russian* and *Prussian* soldiers to teach it them.

Let it not be imagined that I mean to insinuate, that these principles are not dangerous. Principles of *liberty*, whether *English*, *French*, or *Polish* certainly are dangerous to the *despots* of *Europe*, in proportion as they

are beneficial to their *subjects*; and that these despots should unite to eradicate these principles, by destroying the new *Polish* and *French* governments is extremely natural. I only mean to dispute the propriety of our joining the confederacy.

But probably I may be told that the *French* have introduced some new principles in addition to Mr. *Locke's*. True, but these principles do not seem to be very mischievous, or very hostile to human happiness. *To renounce foreign conquests and aggressive war—To confine themselves to the arts of peace, content with cultivating the soil, and improving the natural advantages heaven hath allotted them—To improve the human species by national education, thus attaching man to society by enabling him to partake of its benefits, and apportioning human happiness as equally as possible amongst human kind.* These if errors, do not seem to be of a very atrocious nature, and should they fail of being realised, it ought rather excite our sorrow and commiseration, than our contempt, our indignation, or our vengeance.

But it is said, that in the *seeming* excellence of these principles, consists their danger; that by these reveries of literary enthusiasts, mankind are induced to abandon a present and practicable state of happiness, in pursuit of a visionary system which never can be realized. If so, it became more peculiarly necessary that the *French* government should have been left undisturbed; that its impracticability and inutility might have been clearly manifested. Even the *Russian peasant* and the *German boor* might have been more content under their present despotism, had it appeared that the principles of the *French* revolution naturally led to a state of anarchy, or a state of despotism, more oppressive than their own; whereas the anarchy and disorders of *France* may now be ascribed to the obstruction it has met with, and disturbance it has received from foreign powers. Its advocates may now fairly contend—*Had the French government been left to its natural course, it would have produced a state of human happiness, superior to what the world ever beheld. The despots knew it, they knew the contrast it would form, to the misery they spread around them. They resolved to prevent its maturity, they combined to strangle it in its birth. They attempted it, but in vain.*

—And tho' defeated, and defeated in a manner that must destroy every hope of effecting its overthrow, yet they threaten renewed hostilities; and keep them in perpetual alarm, in hope their deluded subjects may believe, that the miseries and calamities France endures from their machinations, are the consequences of the government they have adopted.

The continental potentates have confederated against France, not from any thing peculiar to her, either as to principles, government, or conduct; and whether we stand by a calm spectator of the destruction of *Polish* liberty, or join the continental powers in subverting the *French*; in either case, it is the general principles of liberty, and not any particular modification of them we are assisting to destroy; and it is the general system of tyranny which we in such case necessarily support.

That the *Austrian*, *Russian*, and *Prussian* monarchs are to confederate with us to force upon France, the *English* Constitution, or any kind of free government, is too absurd to be supposed. It is even not pretended by those who have promoted this war. To our confederates, the *English* principles of government are as obnoxious as the *French*. *Poland* had formed a government similar to our own; the neighbouring monarchs beheld it with abhorrence, conspired to destroy it; and his majesty of *Prussia*, after due deliberation, pronounced that *Poland* was contaminated with *French* principles, which he was determined to destroy. These sentiments we also apparently adopt, for with every diversified system of tyranny, with every species of arbitrary power, we can cordially coalesce; we can confederate for mutual defence. But let any system of liberty appear among the nations of *Europe*; let a form of government arise approximating to our own, with them we disdain treaty or alliance: we look on them with abhorrence, or turn from them with contempt; we suffer them to be destroyed by the surrounding tyrants; and if their power proves insufficient for the purpose; we at last join the confederacy to subvert them. We at least cannot be accused of offering confraternity. We ally ourselves with any government, provided it be hostile to freedom, but liberty and happiness, it seems; we deem so estimable, that we keep them to ourselves. To see the British arms otherwise employed, would

indeed be an uncommon circumstance. The effects of our power and influence, are indeed to be very visibly traced throughout every quarter of the globe, but alas! it is in one unvaried scene of *slavery, desolation, and blood!* No wonder we look with abhorrence on the French principle of communicating to others that liberty they have themselves obtained. It is a principle they certainly cannot be accused of having learned of us.

The interest the continental monarchs have in suppressing the principles of liberty, is plain and obvious; but let it be asked, what interest have *we* therein? I will not ask if his majesty, as elector of *Hanover* has any! but it will not be easy to shew, that the *king* and *people* of *England* can possibly have any: to them it must be perfectly indifferent whether the principles of liberty exist on the *east* or the *west* of the *Rhine*, or whether they be bounded by the *Alps* or the *Pyrennees*.

Yet it is the danger from these principles which is chiefly founded in our ears. It is their *principles* Mr. *Dundas* tells us, which has rendered France *obnoxious* and *dangerous*. And it is their *principles* Mr. *Burke* so vehemently calls on us, to wage *eternal war*, to eradicate.

The war then it seems is intended to subvert these principles? Dismissing for a moment the enquiry, whether they be true or false, dangerous or beneficial; let us ask a plain question, *How a war with the French republic is to destroy them?* *England* is their native land; here they may be deemed indigenous, in *France* only exotic; and whether suffered to remain, or whether the hand of violence tears up the new planted offset, the mother plant still remains. *Here* if any where, *that* must be destroyed: not only Mr. *Burke's* speeches and the Duke of *Richmond's* letters, but Mr. *Locke's* writings must be consigned to oblivion before the principles of the *French* revolution can be annihilated. They are not merely the principles of *that* revolution, but of *all* our modern revolutions. Mr. *Locke* reduced them into form for the *English* revolution; Mr. *Molyneux* resorted to them as a proper foundation for an *Irish* revolution; Mr. *Burke's* coadjutor, Dr. *Price* brought them forward for the *American*, and the national

assembly adopted them for the *French* revolution. They are still very little the worse for wear, and may serve for twenty revolutions more. It is true those who have used them to effect a revolution, have usually wished, as soon as the end has been answered, to consign them to oblivion; yet they survive. Admitting then these principles to be *dangerous in the extreme*; admitting also that their progress in this nation be *rapid and alarming*: nay, that all the exertions of government will be inadequate to preserve the public peace from the disorders that these principles will occasion. Still we must request Mr. Dundas, Mr. Burke, or Mr. Jenkinson to inform us how a war will eradicate these principles, or prevent their further progress amongst us? *Supposing the Austrian and Prussian grenadiers, with the assistance of the English guards, were to eat up thirty millions of French, and bring away the eighty-three Departments in their knap-sacks; would these principles be lost? would the murder of thirty millions of people prove them to be false? or would any calamities the French may endure from the hand of violence make these principles be less admired?* If it be intended to root them out, measures very different indeed from those avowed must be adopted.

Should we indeed ever be informed that we have succeeded in restoring the antient French monarchy to its former lustre, and that the national convention have been all sent to a new *Bastile*, erected on purpose to receive them. Should we be told that the British arms had turned the scale, and determined the war in favor of the allied monarchs, that they had determined no longer to quarrel about the boundaries of their territories; but, from a sense of common danger had associated together against their subjects as their common enemy; I know not but some inquisitive persons amongst us might be apt to enquire the names of the allied kings; and probably might be foolish enough to imagine, that if ever we should have an enterprising monarch on the throne, our liberties might be in rather more danger from the nations of *Europe* being governed by despotic monarchs, who had effectually subjugated their *subjects*, and had large standing armies at their absolute disposal, than if these nations were all democratic republics.—And it is not undeserv-

ing notice, that should the French revolution be suppressed, the *European monarchs* will have learnt a lesson from it they will not soon forget. Mr. *Burke* justly observes that *kings* will be deterred from granting their subjects any degree of liberty; they will from policy be cruel. Should the continental monarchs succeed in suppressing the French revolution, they will hardly make Mr. *Burke* a lying prophet. Tyrants are cruel in proportion to their fears.

Perhaps it will be said, we do not mean to restore the old government of *France*. Indeed it is not easy to surmise what is really meant by the *farrago* of incoherent complaints against *France* with which we are deafened; but certainly as most of them are *philippicks* against the *new* government, the only plain inference is, that this *abominable* government is to be destroyed, and as we should reasonably suppose, the *old* one to be restored: certainly it appears to be intended to compel them to have a *king*. Mr. *Burke's* most *vehement* complaint is, that they hate *kings*. The measures which have been pursued against them, do not seem indeed to have been extremely well calculated to remove their antipathy; and should the king of *England* join the confederacy against them, it is not quite certain that it will totally eradicate their strange prejudices against *kings*. To make them love kings will certainly be rather a difficult task; the utmost we shall be able to effect, will be to compel them to swallow a *king*, which they will disgorge if ever it be in their power.

It is peculiar to this war, that our most imminent danger may possibly result from *success*. Can we believe it possible, that the monarchs of Europe, after we have assisted them to eradicate these principles out of *France*, will suffer them to exist in *England*? Must not this country have the benefit of their *kind* attention? The English language is becoming common on the continent, and they will hardly overlook the danger which may result from it, nor is it to be imagined that if the continent be thoroughly subjugated, *England* can insure her exemption from the yoke. Hence if it were to be supposed possible, that the *Royal Association* should totally subvert the new government of *France*, we might justly entertain the most dreadful apprehensions. The

continental monarchs no longer engaged in endless quarrels about the boundaries of their dominions, but combined together in one horrid confederacy to maintain their power against their *subjects*; all principles of benefit and importance to mankind would be eradicated. *Europe would present to our view a new and a monstrous system of government indeed, far more detestable than the old.* One stagnant and putrid mass of despotism would hang over the whole continent. Then indeed the plan would present to our view a grand unity of design. It would not appear as it now does, in unconnected and disjointed parts. If this be a part of the plan, it is carefully and prudently kept out of sight. We are told nothing of reciprocity. The king of *England* is to engage in this contest from pure motives of regard to his fellow monarchs; to preserve *their* dignity and power, as king of *England*; at least, he asks nothing for himself.

But as there is little chance that *these* principles, whether *French* or *English*, will ever be rooted out, it may be some comfort to those who are alarmed about them, to be informed that however dangerous or however beneficial they may be in *Germany*; yet in *England* they are unimportant. As principles they have long existed in this country: they have been appealed to in both the *English* and *American* revolutions; but that they had any tendency to produce these events may be doubted. If the *English*, the *Irish*, the *Scotch*, or the *Welsh* should ever feel apprehensions sufficient to induce them to revolt, and should have it in their power to effect it, they may possibly resort to *these* principles, if they are to be found; but were they to be lost, that circumstance certainly would not restrain them from revolt: they would do as we did at the revolution, first effect it, and then find some Mr. *Locke* to form a set of principles to defend it. In the mean time there is little danger of our resorting to them, but as themes of literary discussion. Perhaps the Duke of *Richmond* and a few whimsical men may wish to see *these* principles more obviously realised in our government; but to go to war with the *French* for that reason, is as absurd as if we were to commence a crusade against the *Turks*, because a few individuals amongst us may admire the *Koran*; or

against the idolatrous *Chinese*, because an extravagant author has lately expressed his approbation of the *Heathen Theology*.

The people of this country in a situation of increasing prosperity, surrounded with comparative misery, will not be easily induced to hazard this happiness: they will not scrutinize accurately into our form of government; nor hazard a public convulsion, by attempting such speculative, or even real improvements as may endanger the public peace. Some few always have been, and always will be endeavouring to draw the public notice by their speculations, but the bulk of the nation will give but little heed to them. If ever there be the least danger of their interrupting the public happiness, we shall stop our business and our pleasures for a moment, and convince them of their insignificance. That the public peace was in any danger from these principles could hardly be believed; *and cannot be now even pretended*. The public have manifested such an universal approbation of the government and its administration, and such a determination to support it, as was never before witnessed: all *parties*, all *religions*, all *ranks*, merely on being informed, by authority, that the public peace was in danger, have with unexampled zeal, pressed forward to express their attachment, without even stopping to enquire whether the danger be *real* or *imaginary*. Is this a time to tell us of danger from public commotions? If any man really thought so, he must be convinced of his mistake; and it is certainly a little inconsistent in Mr. *Burke*, that he represents us as cleaving to our antient prejudices, because they are prejudices, yet considers us as ready to run mad after the most extravagant innovations; the baneful and mischievous effects of which, he says, we have an example of, in the misery they have brought on the French nation. But admitting there were some ground to apprehend danger from *republicans* and *levellers*, the measures which have been taken, appear to have been fully adequate to the purpose: if *libellers* write, *juries* will convict, and *courts* will punish: if *riots* should happen, *constables* or *soldiers* will suppress them. These seem to be the *proper*, we have experienced them to be

adequate, and they certainly are *cheaper* remedies for the evil, than a *war* against *France*.

As none of the principles of the French revolution can be referred to as being either new or dangerous, Mr. *Burke* to stigmatize it, talks for hours, about *blood* and *atheism*, and then to produce *stage effect* throws daggers about the house; but after he has finished his *theatric rant*, he must be told, that the circumstances attending a revolution, are not its *principles*, and frequently not the *result* of the principles. The massacre of *Glencoe*, or *King William's bloody wars*, our *national debt*, the *septennial* or *riot act*, were never called the *principles* of the *English revolution*. The events of *August* and *September* arose from foreign causes; had those causes not existed, the events would not have followed; yet the *principles* of the revolution would have been the same; so the *hatred to kings* constitutes no part of those principles, it sprang from the hatred *kings* have manifested to their government. The offer of *confraternity* was adopted to counteract the universal *confederation* they saw formed against them, or at least to retaliate it; and had the *confederation* never been formed, there is not the least evidence to prove, that either *hatred to kings*, or the offer of *confraternity* would have resulted from their principles, any more than from the principles of any other republic, or than from the principles of *our* revolution, for even *that* has been disgraced with *blood*, and stigmatized with *atheism*. The resistance of our ancestors to the *antient* authority of the crown, during the reigns of the *Stuarts*, was attended with much *blood-shed*, and produced some *ridiculous*, and some *disgraceful* circumstances. In preserving the *new* line of kings, and the *new* species of monarchy, since 1688, we have shed no small quantity of *blood*, both in *Ireland* and in *Scotland*; and under circumstances, which, Mr. *Burke*, should he ever be disposed to undertake the task, might possibly be able to place in as *odious* a point of view, as he has the *French massacres*.

As to both *atheism* and *murder* they are not new charges against revolution principles. Mr. *Burke* is only a *copyist*; he merely *ecchos* the decrees of the university of *Oxford* just prior to *our* revolution. When

having carefully examined the principles of those very revolutionists, whose conduct and whose writings, even Mr. Burke affects to revere; that celebrated fear of piety and learning, solemnly decreed, that “the said propositions were false, seditious, impious, heretical, and blasphemous, injurious to Christianity, and destructive of all government in church and state, fitted to deprave good manners, corrupt the minds of uneasy men, stir up seditions and tumults, and lead to rebellions, murder of princes, and atheism itself.” And about the same time one of the most learned and respectable of our bishops had sagacity enough to discover *atheism* in Mr. Locke’s writings.

But however dangerous, or however atheistical these principles might then be deemed, we now seem desirous of monopolizing them; and the opposition to the French revolution, arises in no small degree, from an apprehension that other nations may derive the same benefit from them which we have experienced. Much is it to be lamented that in this country there are many, who, fraught with national pride, cast a jaundiced eye around and say, *If the nations of Europe enjoy the sweets of liberty, and their commerce ceases to be exposed to arbitrary laws administered by venal judges;—if their land no longer lies uncultivated, that their nobles may enjoy the pleasures of the chase;—if myriads of clergy draw not away their wealth from the channels of industry;—if arbitrary and rapacious exaction no longer rob the artisan and the peasant of the fruit of their industry, or violence force them from their families, to fill up the ravages of death in the armies of contending despots; then those nations, possessed of superior natural advantages to ourselves, will rear their heads around us; no longer shall we retain our proud pre-eminence, or hold the equilibrium of empire; confined to the natural advantages our island possesses, we shall cease to carry on half the commerce of Europe; no more will the British name carry terror through the world, or its terrors resound from pole to pole.* But let such recollect—that if patriotism be a virtue, it cannot be founded on such malignant propensities; it will not lead us to wish human happiness to be circumscribed by *Albion’s Cliffs*, or that the genius of Liberty should cast her mantle only o’er our isle.

But admitting the overthrow of the old government in France, may, by increasing its *trade, agriculture, and manufactures*, be at some distant period, prejudicial to our own: admitting also, that on this malignant principle we did not scruple to act; yet on the mere *impolicy* of it we may safely rest the question, even under any circumstances which can possibly take place.

To re-establish the old government, we may now certainly reckon amongst the impossibilities: had that been in contemplation, we should have attempted it earlier, when the *Austrian* and *Prussian* armies were in full strength, undiminished by *sickness* and *slaughter*, and undismayed by *defeat*, when their exchequers were not exhausted, and when they would not have rested solely on us for their supply; even then, no man can imagine that our weight thrown into the scale would have turned the ballance; our importance as a *military* power is certainly not great, and where the combined armies of *Austria* and *Prussia* have had so shameful a repulse ours would hardly have made much impression: we might to be sure, have sent a few regiments to be cut off at *St. Cas*, to be slaughtered in the fields of *Fontenoy*, or to sign a capitulation at *Closter-Seven*; and we may now replenish the exhausted coffers of the German princes, to enable them to obstruct the progress of republicanism in *Germany*, for to overthrow it in *France* they can have now no hope. But may it not be asked, what interest can we have in this? What concern have we whether republicanism prevail on the banks of the *Rhine*, the *Volga*, the *Danube*, or the *Po*? If the change of the government of *France* will be advantageous to its *trade* and *manufactures*, and thereby become injurious to *ours*, it is an evil we must prepare to meet, it cannot be prevented. *France* is an established republic, and there, if any where, we must expect to see rising and flourishing manufactories; but from *Germany*, remote indeed must be any such danger: to improve her uncultivated ground will afford employment for an increasing population, and long prevent her engaging in extensive manufactures to our prejudice, and in the mean time they will be taken of us in an increasing proportion. *Germany* is even now the *best* market we have: will she become a worse, when *rich, populous, free*,

and happy? when her forests shall be converted into cultivated villages, full of inhabitants, enjoying the comforts, perhaps the superfluities of life, shall we not find an additional source of trade? If there be an event to be wished for by us of more peculiar importance than any other, it is that *Germany be free*, and in connection with it, that the *Scheldt* be opened; the British vessels will then unload our manufactures on the quays of *Antwerp*, from whence they will be conveyed by the *Flemish canals, Rhine, &c.* to the interior parts of *Europe*: if there be a nation to whom the opening the port of *Antwerp* must be highly advantageous, it is *England*; if there be a nation to whom (except *Holland*) it will be injurious, it is *France*; they are giving to *Flanders* a port far superior to any one they themselves possess in the channel; yet even to *Flanders* is it unimportant, in comparison of us, for of *English* manufactures chiefly, *Antwerp* will become the *depot*.

Wars, when commenced, even on popular ground, and originating in the public voice, have usually a different termination. *Ideal* benefits are in general held out, but they always vanish when the *great* and *certain* evils of war come to be experienced! But in this war, not only every reflecting man will know its impolicy and absurdity, but what is of much more importance, no object can possibly be held out to deceive the ignorant multitude: should they be even told that the large subsidies sent by us to the continent had been so well employed by our *illustrious* allies, that the armies of the German potentates, and the Russian empress had been crowned with the most complete success, that French principles had been effectually eradicated out of *France* and *Poland*, and their *antient* and *venerable* governments *restored, established, and secured*, from the detestable innovations of *reason* and *philosophy*: yet perhaps some may say, the mad and boundless *ambition* of the court of *France* had been sounded in our ears for above a century, it had been represented as endangering the peace and liberties of mankind; to it we attributed our *wars, our taxes, our national debt, our standing army, and expensive navy*. This power, *Mr. Burke* told us no longer existed as a nation, its army without discipline, its finances ruined, he could

only see a vast *chasm*, which once was *France*. And is our commerce ruined, our taxes and national debt increased? are we involved in all the calamities of war, to fill up this *chasm*, to *restore* this dreadful and dangerous power, to give discipline to its armies, and *order* and *energy* to its government? Did you regret that this *dangerous* government lay before you an object of commiseration and contempt? or was the danger only *ideal*, and you regreted that there no longer existed a pretence for perpetual war, accumulated taxes, and a standing army?

Indeed it is scarcely possible that this war can have been projected for any of the avowed purposes; certainly not to keep principles out of this kingdom which were in it before the French revolution took place, and will still exist, whether the French government *stand* or *fall*. The war can hardly be intended to restore the *old* government of France, for that, even if practicable, would be exposing ourselves to a *known* evil: It cannot be intended to give France a *good* government, for that would be injurious to our *trade* and *manufactures*; nor a *bad* one, for that we are told she has already: it is hardly intended to engage in a war, to block up Antwerp from our *own* shipping, nor to prevent *Germany*, *Italy*, *Russia*, or *China* from becoming republics, which can certainly do us no hurt: and a war can hardly be intended for securing the liberty of the *Genevese*, the snowy Alps to *Sardinia*, or the castle of St. *Angelo* to the Pope: we are hardly going to mount our *Rozinante*, to redress all the wrongs, and engage all the windmills in the world.

The motives for this war may be various—While the true born *Englishmen* are frantic with *hatred* of the *French*, and the king terrified with the danger of *Hanover*; the intrigues of a divided cabinet may have produced the present ferment for private purposes, and the minister may at length be propelled (as other ministers have been) into a war, which threatens to be as destructive to his popularity, as to the prosperity of the nation; and as no minister, who commenced a war, ever yet terminated it, we shall probably have to ~~in~~numerate amongst the evils of this war, the loss of a minister, who has justly obtained the confidence and esteem of his country.—*FINIS*.

EXAMINATION

OF

Mr. Paine's Writings.

By WILLIAM FOX.

AUTHOR OF AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF GREAT
BRITAIN, ON THE PROPRIETY OF ABSTAINING
FROM WEST-INDIA SUGAR AND RUM.

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I Presume not to denominate this little tract an answer to Mr. *Paine*, because I do not mean to undertake what that gentleman seems to expect from his opponents: I certainly shall not attempt to convince the soldiers and sailors that to have their discharge, and their pay continued for life, will not be preferable to the present system. Labouring men will certainly approve his plan of having their families supported by the public, as thereby they may be enabled to spend two days more in the week at the alehouse; and, when fifty years of age, receive an additional pension from the public, which may still diminish the necessity they may be under of continuing their labour. That these plans should be received with avidity is not very extraordinary, and that Mr. *Paine* should select them from his work, and circulate them in the public prints, as a specimen of his book, and as the ground on which he challenges his opponents to meet him, is very natural. I shall certainly concede to Mr. *Paine*, these important points: I shall not attempt to prove that *ten pounds a year is not a very good thing*; I shall merely content myself with shewing, that money raised and applied in the manner he proposes, would be a very bad thing indeed for the public: and, as it is his financial arrangements which he seems to consider as his strong hold, I shall venture to take this bull by the horns, and consider Mr. *Paine's* merit as a financier.

But properly to appreciate his merit in this line, it is certainly requisite to ascertain in what light he is to be considered, for on that, in a great measure, will the merit or demerit of his work depend. As an English financier, his plan is profligate and absurd in the extreme; but if he be considered merely as an American partizan, promulgating an illusory plan to destroy the peace, trade, and happiness of this country, that the trade and navigation of his beloved America may prosper on our ruin, then indeed is there meaning and consistency in it. The wisdom of his speculations depends on the probability of our having the folly to adopt them, but their absurdity is so extreme that it may be doubtful whether his proposing them evince most his hatred or his contempt, for this country.

Every author who had before written on the finances of the nation, every individual who had made them the subject of his consideration, have uniformly considered our national debt, as threatening the greatest mischiefs to this country. Judge *Blackstone* considered it as even endangering our liberties: it is true we have not yet experienced those fatal effects, but they are not therefore less inevitable however uncertain may be the period in which they may take place. The difficulties and disadvantages under which the commerce of other countries has hitherto laboured, prevented our own, from being affected by the weight of taxes arising from our national debt, as it is comparative incumbrances which operate on the commerce of nations.

America presents to our view a country whose commerce is totally free from incumbrances. Want of population, and capital are its sole obstacles; but these obstacles are continually diminishing. An Englishman would, therefore, naturally have said (possessed of a flourishing and extensive commerce) it is incumbent on us, assiduously to guard it against every danger, to render it secure that it may be transmitted as a permanent blessing to succeeding generations: we have hitherto enjoyed it almost unrivaled, the nations of Europe, possessed of natural advantages for trade and manufacture, have been hitherto oppressed by governments, which by rendering property insecure, necessitated manufactures and commerce to fly to us for refuge; and Holland, the only country in Europe where property could be deemed secure, laboured under such natural disadvantages, and a load of taxes, even greater than our own, that we had little to fear from her, as a commercial rival. But however flourishing, however advantageous, our present situation may be, we are not warranted to look on it as permanent. Commerce and manufactures are of a transient nature, and it is incumbent on us to guard against those circumstances which may endanger our possession. However deranged the present state of France, and however long that derangement may continue; yet it doubtless will be succeeded by a state more favourable to commerce than the antient system: and however injurious their system of finance may be, yet it can be but temporary, as their national debt is converted into a mass of paper, of which the state is obligated to discharge neither principal nor interest. America, almost incumbered with naval stores, wants only a capital to render her a formidable commercial rival; it is true, considerable may be the lapse of time, before either America or any of the European nations will be in a situation to rival our trade and manufactures: but to that period it is incumbent on us to look: till then we are secure of a pre-eminence. It is necessary to avail ourselves of our present situation, that the prosperity we enjoy may be secured to our posterity.

To effect this, it is absolutely necessary we should in some mode discharge our national debt; otherwise the payment of the interest must inevitably sink our trade and manufactures. Whenever France or America shall possess a large commercial capital; when France shall become so settled in its government, as to afford a temptation to our monied men to transfer their capitals and vest them in the commerce manufactures or agriculture of that nation, the incumbrances under which we labour must have a strong tendency to produce this effect. Hitherto, and especially lately, such has been the state of Europe as to occasion a great influx of the floating cash of the continent to be vested in our funds: this has more than counterbalanced the portion of the interest due to foreigners; the payment of that interest has not therefore been felt: but when the continent of Europe and America, shall open a temptation to employ this capital, England

will be as a bank to be drawn on for that purpose; and even the payment of the interest of the national debt due to foreigners, and much more the withdrawing their capital, will produce the most fatal consequences, exclusive of the consideration of that capital being withdrawn from us, to be employed in swelling the commerce of rival states.

On the contrary, were we to avail ourselves of the present increasing state of our commerce to discharge the national incumbrances, we should then be enabled to enter into a fair competition with either America or France, however favourable for commerce their circumstances may prove; and being in prior possession, there could be no temptation for withdrawing those capitals already vested in our trade and manufactures, which will then be unincumbered. The common expences of our government, would be supported by those internal impositions which the public good would require us to continue, and England would in fact become a mere free port, whose trade and manufactures would in such case be rather increased than diminished, by the increasing prosperity of other states.

Such would be the reasoning of an Englishman, anxious for the prosperity of his country. What is the proposal of this American partizan, Mr. Paine? as might be expected from such a character, exactly the reverse. He proposes, *continuing our national debt, our excises, our customs, and all our taxes, to be hung as a dead weight on our commerce and manufactures for ever*: extremely modest to be sure! by continuing our taxes our navigation will be burdened, and thereby give an immediate encouragement to the American shipping; and our national debt will form a standing fund, to be drawn on gradually, as America shall hold out an inducement to Englishmen to fix their residence in that country; this at present operates but slowly, we are not yet quite certain of the pre-eminence of that country over this; many of us require better evidence of it than Mr. Paine's; but certainly many persons of property may in time be induced to exchange countries, and in that case money in our funds is the best adapted for that purpose, and therefore Mr. Paine very properly advises us for that purpose to reserve it.

Upon the same principle he wishes us to condemn, and trample on a landed interest. To improve the land of England he knows must be a permanent advantage, no emigration can carry that away to America, he therefore tells us the landed interest needs no care to be taken of it, and proposes that all land should pay an additional tax, and in case any person possessed of an estate of £ 500 per annum, should by draining, manuring, inclosing, building, embanking, or other expensive improvements, presume to improve it, the said offender should as a penalty pay a double tax for such improvement, the tax or penalty to increase with the improvement; thus if a gentleman has an estate of twelve thousand pounds, if he improves it to thirteen thousand, half the improved, or additional thousand is to be paid

to the public; and, if he should dare to extend his improvements above a given standard, the whole of it is to be forfeited to the state. Mr. Paine was an exciseman in *Suffex*, he saw there a great deal of poor waste land, of very trifling value to the community, he saw also land which had been equally useless, converted into valuable farms, producing both food and labour for an immense number of people, he knew also that important as these improvements might be to the public, yet were they so expensive to the individuals who effected them, as frequently to injure their fortunes, and rarely to return an interest for the money so employed. It is peculiar to agricultural improvements, that to the public they must be beneficial, whatever they may be to the undertaker: with great propriety Mr. Paine therefore levels, not only his arguments, but his wit also, against them. He says, *we talk of taxing luxuries, surely a large estate is a luxury*: very witty to be sure! and it will certainly be expedient to prohibit the luxury, a large estate, when Mr. Paine will prove the prohibition to be beneficial to the community, or even to the poor. The barriers of property are secured for their benefit, and were these barriers trampled under foot, the millions of the poor would be the principal sufferers; was Sir Richard Arkwright's luxury of fifty thousand *per annum*, beneficial to him alone, or to the thousands and tens of thousands, who were thereby provided with labour and with food; and were he deprived of it, would the public be benefited? Is the Duke of Bridgewater's canal a luxury, which justice and the national good call on us to seize as a forfeiture to the state, to deter others from similar improvements? When Mr. Paine's national convention shall be assembled, when the illiterate, and the profligate shall be assembled to make our laws, when those who are destitute of property shall be called on to control and regulate the property of others, these plans might probably take place. Mr. Paine's sarcasm on a landed interest, would not be lost, he tells them it is *the only interest that needs no particular protection*. He says, "*It is the only one for which the common prayer of mankind is put up; and the only one that can never fail for want of means.*" That when the farmer wants rain, people may wish for it, we will admit; but something more is requisite to render the earth productive; had Mr. Paine lived all his life in America, his observations on this head might have been the mere result of ignorance; there indeed the farmer or occupier needs little protection or encouragement from law; law or government can scarcely injure him.

In that country where only three or four millions of people have to range along a coast two thousand miles long, and can extend their possession inland, without limits, there indeed the farmer has only to select the richest of the land, he can neglect the sterile soil, and leave it in the state it came from the hand of nature: if additional plantations be wanted, still the other is neglected, he has only to inquire in what part of the immense

continent, the hand of Heaven has scattered the richest mold; of that he takes possession, and has only to expel and murder the original inhabitants. But in England, where we have eight millions of people on a spot of ground inferior in size, even to one of the thirteen states, the case is totally different; here I have seen a moss, which had lain useless probably from the flood, converted into fields, and yielding crops equal to the richest soil; yet thousands of acres of similar land still lay round it in its original state, because the owners were deterred from engaging in the expensive process: many of these undertakings originate in a laudable ambition of our landed proprietors to improve their estates, as no pecuniary returns can possibly compensate them. Is then the landed interest, the only permanent, the most important interest of the state, to be trampled on, degraded, and insulted? Are we to be told it needs no peculiar protection, it has the prayers and wishes of the community, and it will therefore bear taxes, penalties, and forfeitures?

On this subject Mr. Paine spends many pages, he commences it at page 100, by commenting on Mr. Burke's nonsense. "*That the House of Lords is the great ground and pillar of the landed interest.*" But Mr. Burke's text and Mr. Paine's comment are equally absurd. The Feudal Barons indeed sat in Parliament in right of their baronies, so did the Bishops and Abbots in right of their temporalities; the Bishops do so still; but the temporal Lords bear no resemblance to the Feudal Barons, they now sit by authority of the King's writ, it is not requisite for them to have an inch of land, many of them have none. Their influence and weight they derive from their landed interest, not from their privilege as Lords. The possession of land in this country, by giving influence in the House of Commons, frequently procures them seats in the House of Lords, but if no such House existed, their influence in the Commons, which gives them their real importance would be the same; and as in that case they would sit in the House of Commons themselves, the landed interest would acquire additional weight, in that House, where ever since the revolution it has much needed it. It is the House of Commons, which by its constitution, should be the pillar of the landed interest, as every member is required to have a landed estate; but that is so trifling, and frequently nominal, that since the increased weight of the monied interest, the landed interest has been oppressed by it.

Mr. Paine to establish the position of the weight of the landed interest, says, "*the only use to be made of this power (and which it always has made) is to ward off taxes from itself.*" And to support this proposition, he fabricates such a monstrous collection of false statements as to our taxes, as might surprise those who have not read his "*Common Sense*:" where to induce congress to build a fleet, he calculates the expence of building the English navy at less than half the real cost, and to support this estimate he quotes a book printed in 1758, thereby conveying an idea that the

estimates were of that date; but he carefully kept concealed what was stated in the book itself, that the estimates were of the last century, when the materials and labour of ship-building, were at half the present price. Such is the celebrated Mr. Paine, who boasts he possesses an heart that knows no guile.

As we are now coming to a statement of facts, which considerably affect the veracity of this great man, we will be somewhat particular. In page 109 he states that our annual taxes in 1066 was £.400,000. In 1166 £200,000. In 1266, £150,000. In 1366, £130,000. In 1466, £100,000. He then pronounces an eulogium on our ancestors for their republican economy in taxes. "*That the people would not be imposed upon, but kept the government in awe as to taxation.*" For my own part I am not much inclined to accept this compliment of Mr. Paine's on our ancestors, till he points out those taxes, or at least some one of them, which were repealed during those centuries. I have read all the statutes of that period, but I do not recollect any shop-tax, or commutation being set aside. Many complaints are to be found of taxes being levied; and promises that only the old ones should be extorted but their abolition, nobody except Mr. Paine ever discovered. But is Mr. Paine, who talks so familiarly about the feudal system, so totally ignorant of it as not to know that it was from that system, and not from taxation, that the Conqueror and his successors derived their revenue. He held 1422 manors, which, according to Sir R. Cotton, had belonged to Edward the Confessor. The revenue of these demesne lands, according to *Ordericus Vitalis*, came to the immense sum of £.387,265 per annum, only £12,735 short of what Mr. Paine states to be the whole of his revenue.

Will he now be so obliging as to inform us what were those heavy taxes at the conquest, which by the virtuous struggles of the people during four centuries were reduced to a fourth part. The fact is exactly the reverse of Mr. Paine's statement. This revenue of the crown arising from the demesne lands rapidly decreased, because they were continually granted away by the successive monarchs to their favourites; thus the revenue of the crown decreased as he has stated, but it had nothing to do with taxation, except to increase it, for as the grant of these lands impoverished the crown, it became necessary to levy taxes, and to call Parliaments for that purpose. Could Mr. Paine be ignorant of this? certainly not, if he ever read a history of England. But we have not yet done with his Scale of Taxation, for as he found by his former series, that the virtuous resistance of the people to taxation increased for four centuries, he tells us the three last centuries prove that the national character of the English has changed. We did indeed suppose that since the time of Richard the third, we had changed, and we presumed for the better: but this it seems is a mistake; and it is rather remarkable, that both Mr. Burke and Mr. Paine should concur in

a desire to make us look back with regret to the happiness enjoyed by our ancestors in the 14th and 15th centuries. Mr. *Burke* tells us, that *since the 14th century we have scarce made any improvements in our government*; and Mr. *Paine* asserts that "*it would have been impossible to have dragooned the former English into the excess of taxation which now exists.*" Indeed it gives me great pleasure that I can heartily concur with him in this sentiment: firmly am I persuaded that at the period of which he speaks (1466) it would not have been in the power of bloody King *Richard*, to have dragooned the people of this country into the payment of seventeen millions of money, even had he striped them of all their property: it may even be doubted whether the fee simple of this Island would then have sold for that sum. The nation, as Mr. *Paine* justly observes, has since that time undergone a great change; we are now unfortunately in such a situation, that government can dragoon us into the payment of this immense sum.

It must be observed that Mr. *Paine* has very easy and compendious rules for forming a judgment on subjects, which some people suppose to be of some difficulty. Thus to judge of a government and its administration we are to look at the amount of taxes. Mr. *Pitt*, he says, *boasts of how much revenue, whereas the boast ought to be how little*: judging by this rule certainly our government deserves all the rancour Mr. *Paine* has expressed. It certainly is the worst government, and Mr. *Pitt* is the worst minister that ever existed; and what is still worse, he does not seem disposed to mend and notwithstanding Mr. *Paine's* advice, he still continues plundering us of more and more every year. When Mr. *Paine* published his book, he stated the revenue at seventeen millions, this year it is said to be eighteen. If so it is extremely obvious, that in the course of a single year, our government is grown exactly a seventeenth part worse, and the minister in precisely the same proportion, more boyish and profligate. As the gross amount of our taxes thus appears to be the proper scale by which the defects of our government are to be estimated, it will follow, not only, that our government is the worst that ever existed, and that it has been gradually growing worse for above three centuries, but that if, in case of a war, the produce of our permanent taxes should decrease from fourteen millions, their present amount, to half that sum, which is extremely probable, it will then be equally evident, that our government is improved, and that its administration is only half as bad as at present. Such is the nature of the reasoning of this profound logician.

It is remarkable that notwithstanding these exclamations as to the amount of our taxes, yet there is one of them Mr. *Paine* seems much to regret to find so low; and so extremely anxious is he to convince us of it, that he hazards assertions, which not only every person the least acquainted with the subject knows to be false, but which are so extravagantly absurd, that the most

ignorant must suspect their falsehood. In page 100, he says, "notwithstanding taxes have increased and multiplied upon every article of common consumption the land-tax has diminished. In 1788 it was £.1900,000 which is half a million less than it produced, almost an hundred years since." And he gives us a reference to Sir John Sinclair in a note. This reference is perhaps the most extraordinary instance of literary effrontery existing. He does not give us the amount of the land-tax at the time mentioned in the text. He does not produce a single year in any King's reign, from the conquest to this time. He does not do this, because there is not one can be referred to, but what would directly falsify his assertion. An appearance of evidence was all he wanted, and presuming the bulk of readers, would read his text without troubling themselves to compare it with his note, he gives, for the amount of the land-tax at the revolution, the sum which in the time of the civil war, was levied on all property, and every species of income, by the republican army. Had the assertion in the note been true that the republic in 1646 raised two millions and a half on the land, what would it prove, but the tyranny, oppression, and injustice of a republican government. Would it serve Mr. Paine's argument to shew that the republic in one year assessed on the land, more than was levied on it during the whole reign of any one of the *Stuarts*. But the fact is not so. Mr. Paine to induce us to plunder the landed proprietors, does not scruple to slander even republicanism itself. The republic in the last century was certainly tolerably disposed to punish the landed men for their adherence to monarchy: but they never thought of doing it to the extent Mr. Paine alleges. I have the assessment for 1657 now before me, it is a general tax on every species of property, land included, at sixty thousand pounds per month: not a third part of our present land-tax; and instead of the land having been favored since the revolution, it appears that prior thereto there existed no such thing as a regular land-tax. Lord Coke in his 2d. Inst. page 77, gives an account of the antient subsidies and fifteenths: they were assessments on all property, real and personal, and till the revolution were levied only occasionally. This mode was followed for some time even after the revolution. That in 1697 is called "*an Act as well by a land-tax as by several subsidies and other duties.*" It included a capitation of four shillings on all but paupers. This is about the period Mr. Paine alludes to, when the amount of the levy on all property, land included, was only about half of what Mr. Paine asserts was raised on the land only. The mode of assessing the land only was by degrees adopted soon after. The land proprietors were deemed enemies to the Hanover Succession, and as such they were treated. Addison's *Fox-hunter*, and Fielding's *Squire Western* were intended to depict and ridicule them. The object of government, while revolution politics prevailed, was to raise a monied interest and depress the landed. The artifice with which

this plan was conducted is somewhat curious. After the revolution, though the acts were formed in the antient manner as an assessment on personal as well as real property yet Dr. Davenant tells us, as people were suffered to give in what accounts they pleased of their personal effects and incomes, and government adopting no mode to render the assessment effectual, it by degrees became trivial: thus tho' by the first of Queen Ann, a subsidy was granted on all personal effects, as well as land, and even the practitioners of the law were assessed at four shillings in the pound of their neat income, yet was it so levied, that tho' it ought in the increased state of personal property at that time, to have raised some millions, yet it produced only £300,524. The assessment on personal property and income being become so inconsiderable, the levy was soon after discontinued, and the whole raised on the land. Yet is the old form still continued in framing the land-tax acts, they contain a general assessment on every species of property, except money in the funds. The commissioners are vested with extraordinary power, their decisions cannot be appealed from. The oath they formerly took was, "you shall cause the rates and duties to be charged on stock in trade, debts at interest, pensions, annuities, stipends, professions, offices, and the personal duty of four shilling to be duly levied according to your skill and judgment." This oath has been discontinued, that they might not perjure themselves, and they now only take the oath of allegiance. The act called a *Land-tax Act* is now trampled under foot, and totally disregarded by those who ought to execute it, and a tax is raised every year on the land, to the amount of two millions, in direct opposition to the very act, under which it is pretended to be levied. On what principle this act is thus uniformly dispensed with might call for inquiry, as much as those numerous abuses, of the existence of which Mr. Paine labours so much to convince us: it is now adduced merely to illustrate Mr. Paine's wonderful position, of the landed interest having been favored in respect to taxation since the revolution, and if he can spare a few moments of his valuable time, we might beg him to support his assertion, in page 101, "That before the coming of the Hanoverians, the taxes were divided in nearly equal proportions between the land and articles of consumption, the land bearing rather the largest share." Or rather will he shew that prior to within a few years of the Hanover Succession, there was any regular tax at all levied solely on the land. And it may also be asked, if a portion of any particular species of property can be seized on by the state, on any other principle than that, on which Mr. Paine would instigate a national convention to seize upon the whole.

The landed interest, or as he chuses to call it "*the Aristocracy*," he says, are not the farmers who work the land, and raise the produce, but are the mere consumers of the rent; and when compared with the active world, are the drones, a seraglio of males, who neither collect the honey nor form the hive, but exist only for lazy

"*enjoyment.*" And in page 103, "*It is difficult to discover what is meant by a landed interest, if it does not mean a combination of aristocratical land-holders, opposing their own pecuniary interest, to that of the farmer, and every branch of trade, commerce, and manufacture.*" Notwithstanding the difficulty Mr. Paine is under of discovering the meaning of a landed interest, most people will imagine it to be very obvious; they will suppose it to mean, the interest of those whose property is vested in land; as a commercial interest means, the interest of those whose property is vested in commerce, or a monied interest, that of those persons whose property is vested in money, and its various securities, and they will be apt to ask Mr. Paine what necessary relation aristocracy or combination, has to a landed, more than a commercial or monied interest. Those who attend to our legislative proceedings will not easily discover this aristocratic "*combination of persons in a common interest.*"

The monied interest since it has acquired weight in the legislature, has indeed given evidence, if not of a combination, yet of an active powerful attention to its peculiar interest. When at the close of the last war, they possessed twenty millions of navy bills, they were not content with having bought them at a great discount, and with government fulfilling the only compact it was under, the payment of the interest: they by their clamour and weight in parliament, compelled government to fund them, and in so doing to give them three millions more than the bills were worth, and more than upon any principle of justice or common sense they ought to have received: and this they effected in spite of the opposition of the minister himself. The landed interest may indeed in one sense deserve the epithet of drones, which Mr. Paine bestows on them. It will not be easy to discover any traces of their activity to guard themselves from injustice: possessed of a property of six hundred millions, they might be supposed to have some weight in the legislature; but little solicitous have they been to avail themselves of it. Theirs is the only species of property, on which an annual depredation is made, under the denomination of a tax. On them is quartered the whole body of the national clergy, though the original claim to tythe had no particular relation to land: the speculation of the stock-jobber, and the winnings of the gambler, are by the law of tythes equally subject to clerical claims, though for several centuries the clergy have fastened themselves solely on landed property. The rate to maintain the poor is really levied on them, for tho' it be levied on the tenant, the landlord's property is depreciated by every incumbrance with which it is loaded: hence it is evident that he maintains the appendages of the national religion; the roads, prisons, bridges, and almost all important public expences and tho' the possession of landed property be naturally of the simplest nature, yet the lawyers derive their principal support from its being involved in such a labyrinth, that they themselves are frequently lost in its

mazes. And lastly the whole of this vast property, is for near half the year converted into a vast common, to be laid waste and trodden under foot, by every individual who can call himself esquire, or who, by renting a shop in 'Change-alley, or a warehouse in Thames-street, to a given amount, can break the inclosures and spoil the crop of the best estate in the kingdom: and the law has been so careful to protect him in the trespass, that in case it does not exceed a given sum, the greater part of the expence of the action falls on the landed proprietor who presumes to seek redress for the injury. Mr. Paine attributes the game laws to the undue influence of the landed interest, and tells us "*if there were a house of farmers they would not exist.*" It has been calculated that the damage resulting to one single county by the game laws, amounts to £.40,000 *per annum*. Will Mr. Paine inform us whether the county is not worth so much the less to its proprietors, and whether the rentals would not be increased if the game were not protected by law, for the amusement of the country attorney, the sporting parson, or the rusticated cit. Let us no longer complain of uncultivated land, of deserted villages, or of the slow progress of agricultural improvements; that they take place in a property so circumstanced, must be attributed to the patriotism, or the ignorance of the proprietor, who, after all these incumbrances and restrictions on his estate, is still farther controlled by capricious laws in the sale of the produce of his land.

It is somewhat extraordinary that Mr. Paine's partizans should be remarkably solicitous to disclaim the leading principle of their master. An equalization of *rights*, not of *property*, they pretend he contends for: but if there be any meaning in his work, it is, that all the most important boundaries of property should be trodden under foot, for if the most considerable branch of property, that of land and its improvement, is to be thus stigmatized, surely no other can be deemed inviolable.

That the earth in its natural state is equally the property of every individual born on it, we will readily admit; all men have an equal right to the use of it, and no man could be entitled to more, if the good of society did not require it. But the earth in a state of nature affords a miserable support to a small number of inhabitants: in the imperfect state resulting from mere occupancy, its benefit to man is inconsiderable, in comparison of the improved state of which it is capable. As then a transferable and permanent property in land is necessary for the support of an increased number of inhabitants, and as the increase of its inhabitants is the will of Heaven, it thence necessarily follows that that state of the earth should exist, which is necessary to adapt it to an increasing state of man; that is a permanent and transferable property. Hence this state of a landed property which Mr. Paine stigmatizes, appears to be of the most sacred nature, it must have a collateral existence with the

increase of man, and to shake it, is to terminate that increase. The fecundity of the earth, under the cultivating hand of man, has scarce any limits from that savage state in which hundreds of acres are requisite to support an individual, to the support of many on a single acre: thus the earth appears to be wisely fitted by its maker to the increasing state of man: the earth in this improved state may be deemed almost a new creation; it bears no more resemblance to its original state, than the oak growing in the forest, to the oak when converted into a ship, and floating on the waves: it becomes as much a property, and it is a property which the good of society calls on us to sanction and protect, far indeed beyond any other. A capital vested in any other species of property, can be transferred from one part of the earth to another, the proprietor is a citizen of the world: but agricultural improvement must take place in confidence of the permanency and stability of those laws on the faith of which they were made, and if society innovate on this species of property, it violates that confidence which was reposed in it, and a confidence from whence it derives the most essential benefits. A capital vested in any other pursuit, requires not an equal confidence in the good faith of society, because the expectation of a reimbursement is far less remote: the compass of a few years limits our views, and circumscribes our hopes; and a disappointment will not result from any remote changes in the laws, or convulsions in the state: but the more operose improvements of the earth, must result from views far more distant, to build, plant, inclose, embank, and drain; to render the earth fruitful by combining its various soils, an inducement must be held forth, far beyond the fragil tenure of human life; the prospect of transmitting them to a succession of heirs, and if that succession be violated, or the property dilapidated, that implied compact is broken, on the faith of which the improvements were made.

With this obvious view of landed property before us, let us consider Mr. *Paine* stigmatising as useless drones, the proprietors of the most improved portion of this habitable globe. Men whose labour or whose property has converted this island into a residence for ten millions of men in all the various classes of civilized life; which originally would not have preserved a tenth part of the number, in a state of mere savage existence.

But these men it seems, are, "*mere drones, they are not the farmers who work the land and raise the produce, but are the mere consumers of the rent.*" This will deserve some consideration. The idea of a drone is that of a useless intruder into a well ordered society who lives on the spoil of it, and whom it is incumbent on the society to expel from amongst them. This certainly is the idea Mr. *Paine* means to convey to his national convention when it shall assemble, and as the labouring part of the nation will compose a great majority, perhaps ten to

one, what can be a more natural step for them first to adopt, than to expel from the hive, these mere drones, who do not raise the produce, but only consume the rent; and the idea must be extended still farther, for by a parity of reason, all are to be considered as drones, who do not labour themselves, but derive their support from the labour of others: that they pay the labourer his hire cannot be deemed sufficient, the land proprietor himself, or the person from whom he derives his title has done that, he has inclosed the ground to secure the crop, and the barn to receive it, but as he neither sows nor reaps it, he can from thence it seems derive no title to any part of it: thus the farmer himself, if he hires the labourers and derives a living from their labour and not his own, must be equally destitute of a title to the crop; the landlord's large capital and the farmer's small one are indeed both employed, and tho' without them the crop could never have been raised, yet is the labourer who sows and reaps intitled to the whole, all but him are mere drones, living on the labour of others.

Every other great class of property stands in the same predicament: the owners of shipping, are "*mere drones, they are not the mariners who navigate the vessel, they are the mere consumers of the freight.*" The heirs of Sir R. Arkwright will possess a luxurious property equal to most landed estates in the kingdom, they may like the land-holders let it, and become the mere consumers of a rent, and tho' Mr. Paine in his 141 page only proposes depriving them of a part, yet surely if he be consistent the whole ought to be forfeited. If a national convention adopt his principles they will consider as a luxury every estate from whence an income is derived without labour, and will convert the mere drones into useful bees, that is, into active citizens, or labouring men. Yet have Mr. Paine's partizans the assurance to tell us that Mr. Paine's principles, equalise rights only, and not property.

Mr. Paine in the same page, in which he says "*it is difficult to discover what is meant by a landed interest, if it does not mean a combination of aristocratical land-holders,*" immediately proceeds to admit its superior importance, "*it is the interest* (he says) *not of the policy, but of the existence of man, and when it ceases he must cease to be,*" and from thence infers, with that perversity of intellect which characterises his work, that it needs no particular protection. Most people would have drawn a different inference, they would have supposed that in proportion as it was important, it should be powerfully supported and sedulously guarded. Mr. Paine, indeed chooses to suppose that mankind possess a sufficient portion of wisdom to discern the public good, and virtue and fortitude enough to pursue it: but the history of mankind will hardly support his position. Turnpike roads, broad-wheel waggons, saw-mills, and cotton-mills, however beneficial to the public, have not always received the

countenance, even of that part of the community for whose benefit they were particularly adopted, until use had rendered them familiar, and experience proved their utility. This observation applies more particularly to landed property, as the benefit the public derive from securing it, though the most important is not the most obvious: an act to seize on all the shipping of the kingdom, and divide it among the sailors, would be easily seen to be dangerous, because every one must know the very rumour of it would deprive us of our shipping: but Mr. *Paine* may suggest to a national convention, that no such danger can result from seizing on landed property; the improvements of the land exist, the barns are built, the inclosures made, and the soil improved, these cannot be conveyed away to another nation: to divide it among those who have hitherto laboured on it for a miserable existence, is a plan plausible at least.

If legal sanctions and all the energy of the state be scarcely sufficient to preserve property, little veneration can we expect to be paid to it, when, as Mr. *Paine* proposes, all government and all law shall be dissolved, and the whole property in the nation shall be thrown into one mass to be disposed of at the will of the majority; when even plunder may assume the forms of law. It will then be in vain to urge, that the land, by having been secured to the proprietors for a series of years, has received improvements, by which it renders tenfold more than if the *usufruct* only had been enjoyed;—That those improvements had been made under an implied compact, that a permanent property in them was established; and that a violation of this property was an infraction of that implied compact, from whence resulted those improvements by which the earth was fitted to support ten times the number of inhabitants it would sustain if mere occupancy only had been enjoyed. It would probably be in vain to urge, that by seizing the improvements already made, all future improvements would be obstructed, for that in proportion as the property in land was insecure and limited, in that proportion would the motive to improve it be diminished.

As the increase of mankind is only limited by the means of their support, so is the earth capable of yielding that support to man in an almost unlimited degree. This island is perhaps in the most perfect state of cultivation of any part of the globe. yet it is probably as inferior to the state of cultivation to which it may be carried, as its present state is superior, to even that of America itself. As therefore a permanent and exclusive property in land is that which will render the earth fit to sustain the greatest number of inhabitants, it follows that to preserve that permanent and exclusive property must be a principal object of laws and government, and in proportion as any system of government tends to weaken the possession of land, in that proportion it it unfit to be adopted in that advanced stage of civil society where the increase of man calls for an increasing means of support.

Mr. *Paine*, to stigmatize the landed interest, reproaches them with the restraints under which their property labours from the continuance of barbarous laws. The ancient military tenures, to which the land of the various countries of Europe was subjected, arose not from a disposition to benefit land-holders or the public, but merely to create a power that might defend the new made conquests: hence the holders of the lands were not suffered to alienate them, and they were limited in their descent to a single individual, that the strength of the military chief might not be weakened by dividing the estate, and for the same purpose during a minority they were seized into the King's hands. Mr. *Paine* seems to reproach the landed interest that it was delivered from the last of these restrictions, by the statute of *Charles* the second, for abolishing the Court of Wards, and then, to shew how perfectly absurd and inconsistent it was possible to be, he also insults them, in page 107 of the first edition of his second part (from whence all the quotations have been taken) because the law of entails and primogeniture still continues. I will admit those restraints to form what Mr. *Paine* terms, "a law of brutal injustice." The interest of the land-holder and the community, both suggest that his property should be secure, and his authority and control over it as unlimited as over any other species of property: that he should be allowed to alienate and to devise it to whom he pleases. But what ever hardships the landed interest may labour under from our present system of laws, they will hardly thank Mr. *Paine* for his interference, they will certainly prefer paying a fine to the crown for alienation, to being deprived of it altogether; and I believe most men, though they might wish for the liberty of disposing of landed, like other property, to whom they please, yet they will certainly prefer its descending to their eldest son, to its being, as Mr. *Paine* proposes, forfeited to the state, or disposed of by those who have no property of their own, and consequently whose interest in the state, can be but of a subordinate nature: for contrary to Mr. *Paine*'s assertion, no part of the community can have an interest in the laws and government of the country equal to the landed proprietors; none can have an interest so perfectly connected with its general interest: none who are so incapable of pursuing a partial, in opposition to that general interest. The landed proprietors not only possess the largest portion of national property, that on which the principal portion of wealth has been expended, but they are the only persons who have any material interest in the future state of this country.

When every individual can be supposed to have an equal interest in the state, and every class of mankind are equally concerned in the future and permanent prosperity of the country, then let every individual assume an equal share in its government: but ere we call the coal-heaver from his labour, and the coachman from his box to legislate, we have at least a right to some evidence that our laws will be thereby improved.—*FINIS.*

THOUGHTS

3

ON THE

D E A T H

OF THE

KING *of* FRANCE.

By WILLIAM FOX,

L O N D O N:

SOLD BY J. RIDGWAY, YORK STREET, ST. JAMES'S
SQUARE; W. RICHARDSON, OPPOSITE THE ROYAL
EXCHANGE; T. WHIELDON AND BUTTERWORTH,
FLEET STREET; AND M. GURNEV, NO. 128,
HOLBORN HILL.

1793.

Where may be had, just published, by the same Author,
The Interest of Great Britain, respecting the French War, 4th Edition.
An Examination of Mr. Paine's Writings.
Address to the People of Great Britain, 26th Edition.
Summary View of Evidence relating to the Slave Trade, 6th Edition.

THE melancholy catastrophe of the king of France, and the horror it has excited in this country, call for investigation; because consequences of great importance seem likely to result from it, and, in proportion as these consequences may be important, it is requisite that the investigation should be cool and unimpassioned. Even in the ordinary situations, and common occurrences of human life, great is the risk and danger of giving up our conduct to the guidance, even of those passions, which, when under the guidance and control of reason, are valuable and amiable. The human passions may properly give energy to our actions, when reason has marked out their course, and fixed their boundaries; but, without these precautions, they are dangerous in the extreme; nor can any action, resulting merely from our passions, be denominated virtuous or moral, any more than the fidelity of a dog, the harmlessness of a sheep, or the attachment of a dove.

If we extend our views from common life, to the more enlarged sphere of human action, which history presents to our view, we shall find the most enormous evils, arose from the dictates of reason being overborn by the fervor of the passions, under whose fallacious colouring men have supposed themselves to be in the path of duty, while they have been outraging every moral principle, and trampling on every duty of social life. Under the impression of heroism and patriotism, what dreadful mischiefs have pervaded every age of the world! and an imagination inflamed with an idea of advancing God's glory, has been productive of no less dreadful consequences; not much inferior have been those which have resulted from a desire of avenging the real or imaginary wrongs of individuals: Nor is this principle confined to the annals of chivalry; it disgraces the page of history. For upwards of a century this nation was deluged in blood, by the partizans of the claimants of the crown; and in the present century we have had two civil wars, to avenge the injuries, and redress the wrongs of the house of Stuart.

Thus have we experienced the mischiefs of this principle, of which the danger is the greater, as it assumes the guise of justice and humanity. Were we merely to accompany with a look of pity, and the sigh of commiseration, the unfortunate Bourbons, or the still more unfortunate Stuarts; it might not be necessary accurately to investigate the foundation of our pity, or to be very solicitous exactly to apportion it. If it tends to meliorate our minds by contemplating human woe, or, to improve them by reflection on the uncertainty of human felicity, no harm would result, though our sorrow should border on excess: nor may it be requisite in such case, to be very anxious to bring our feelings to the bar of reason. But if the profligate and designing attempt to take advantage of human frailty; if they excite our pity that they may work it into rage; if they attempt to suffuse our eyes in tears, that they may lead us blindly, to perpetrate greater mischiefs than those they affect to deplore; it will then become us to give firmness to our nerves, to repress our feelings, and to call upon reason to resume her throne. She will tell us, that the continuance both of moral and physical evil in the world, is the will of him who made it; and that the cognizance of human actions, as to their moral nature, belongs to him who will in due time render to every man according to his works; that man can have no authority to punish his fellow mortals, but what is derived from the will, either express, or implied of their common parent. Hence it appears that *that* degree and species of authority is to be exercised among men united in social compact, which the preservation of that compact requires; and in the several relations of life that which those special relations call for. But in none of those cases cognizance is taken of the action abstractedly, as to its moral turpitude, but merely in reference to the relation between man and man; if we presume to go beyond this, we are trampling on the authority of him, who, speaking of the good and evil in this world, decreed, "let them grow together " till the harvest."

This principle is actually recognized by the general structure of our criminal code, which forbears to take notice of many offences, though of a very criminal nature. A man may suffer even his parent to perish

for want; and though, in this and a variety of instances, he might be guilty of an atrocious murder, the law will take no notice of it. Perjury, if unaccompanied with any injury to society; and even adultery and seduction, though attended with circumstances which might constitute the climax of human guilt, are totally unnoticed by our criminal law. As thus the most enormous crimes are suffered to go unpunished; so actions not merely of trivial guilt, but which result from good and amiable dispositions, if deemed injurious to society, are punished with severity. The *Grecian Daughter*, for obstructing the execution of a legal sentence, must have been deemed guilty of a crime, by every well constituted system of law. And it is not only in annexing punishment to crime, but in conducting the legal process that we lose sight of the moral turpitude of the offence. Thus we acquit the most notorious and well-known criminals, rather than violate those rules of evidence which we deem the good of society to require; nor is an individual suffered to inflict those punishments which the laws have annexed to crimes, however certain he may be of the criminal's guilt.

If then a state of civil compact, where mankind are connected by a recognized system of laws, enforced by the sanctions of government; where the crimes can be accurately defined, and the criminals discriminated and punished; the moral nature of human actions is thus disregarded, and they are not punished on the mere abstract principle of their moral turpitude; surely we are not on any such principle, to enter forcibly into other societies, to punish its members, either collectively or individually? Such a proceeding must necessarily be destitute of every proper principle, on which man can be authorised to take cognizance of the actions of his fellow creatures. There is no acknowledged system or laws to govern the conduct of nations in thus punishing each others crimes. The dissonance in the laws and customs of different nations, renders them very inadequate judges of each others proceedings; nor are there any means by which the nature of the offence can be properly estimated. The accused nation will not submit to plead to any foreign jurisdiction, they must therefore be condemned unheard. The French national

convention will be as little disposed to submit the justice of their revolution to the adjudication of the British court, as the English convention would in 1688 have been to have submitted that of the English revolution to the court of France. Such proceedings must be destitute of the semblance of justice; and those who have the government of nations so avowedly act on political motives, that, when others are pretended, it may reasonably be imagined that the view is to perpetrate crimes, under the pretence of punishing them. But, admitting the British court to be actuated by the purest motives;—admitting that Africa, the West-indies, the East-indies, and our Sister Kingdom were to bear a united testimony to the rectitude and beneficence of our conduct, that we never interfere in the concerns of other countries, but to promote their happiness, and secure their rights;—that our sword is the sword of justice, and not of outrage; and, that it never was unsheathed but to protect the innocent, and to punish the aggressor: yet, still might the propriety of our avenging the death of the king of France be doubted, because we have hardly the means of discriminating the guilty, or ascertaining their proportionate share in the guilt.

Political events are of so complicated a nature, and arise frequently from such contingencies, that to distinguish the respective shares of merit or demerit in the actors is usually very difficult, even to those who are actors in the scene, and most intimately acquainted with its conduct; and it must be peculiarly so, respecting the French revolution, from the various forms it has assumed, the variety of circumstances with which it has been attended, and the numerous actors who have taken part in it. Are we to punish the municipal officers who conducted the execution, or the individual members of the convention who voted it? Admitting the king to have committed no offence that deserved punishment; admitting our judgment on this head to be infallible; and admitting also that the majority of the national convention saw it in the same point of view; yet still we are inadequate judges how far they were voluntary actors in the scene, or how far they were impelled by circumstances; whether they were actuated

by malice or revenge, or whether, in a critical moment, and threatened with destruction by surrounding enemies, they might think it expedient to unite the nation, by removing the only source of discord that existed amongst them. If it be said that they ought to have rendered justice uninfluenced by popular clamour, let it be asked if the British parliament have always manifested such laudable firmness? Did they not avowedly to appease a popular clamour, repeal the Jew bill, and deprive of their acknowledged right, thousands of peaceable subjects? If it be said the French convention were not justified in punishing an individual, on the mere political principle, that the peace, the safety, and the good of the community called for it; may it not be demanded, for what offence the houses of Stuart and of Savoy were set aside by a British parliament? If attachment to the Romish see was their crime; of that crime was Louis equally guilty, and if the security of this island justified *us* in considering it as such, surely the national convention of France are equally justifiable in paying the same attention to the security, the peace, and the happiness of the first nation in the universe.

It is customary in this kingdom, to speak contemptuously of the national convention. I will so far comply with the fashion, as to acknowledge them to have been perfectly insignificant on this occasion. The municipal officers, who executed the sentence, and the national convention who decreed it, may be considered as the mere instruments, the accidental terminators of an event which resulted from a train of circumstances: and, in investigating those circumstances, we shall be far more likely to find the real criminals, than among the national convention, or the municipal officers. Mr. Burke, even in the early stages of the French revolution, confidently predicted a fatal catastrophe; this was certainly not very difficult for him to do with some degree of certainty. Jonathan Wild seldom failed in his predictions. Those who were not in the secret of the hostile measures, intended to be pursued, respecting the French revolution, could not, indeed, perceive any thing of a very king-killing aspect: not a single circumstance attending the establishment of the new government could be referred to, as containing the seeds of danger

to the royal person. To impose this on the public mind, the establishment of the new government, and the attempt to subvert it, must be confounded. The measures taken to effect the restoration of the old government, whether they succeeded, or whether they miscarried, not merely threatened, but insured destruction to the unfortunate monarch. The hostile armies gathering round, were the sure presages of his fate.

At that important and critical moment, the national assembly invoked our interference, and offered to submit to our mediation; an offer honorable to themselves! —honorable to us! They reposed a confidence in us, that, possessing a free government, we would not impose on them their antient despotism. And will not some be apt to imagine that this was the real reason that we refused our mediation? They will perhaps say that subverting the infant liberty of France and Poland, and establishing antient slavery, was an office more becoming German and Russian despots, than a British nation, and that it was more convenient that we should stand aloof, at least for the present. The Prussian, the Austrian, and the Russian armies might undertake the business; they possibly might effect it, as they have that of Poland, without our interference; if not, the contest might produce some event which would afford us a more colourable pretext for interfering, than the subversion of the liberties of France or Poland, or securing the despotism of Germany. Among these events, the most certain and the most desirable, must be the death of the king of France, by the hands of his enraged subjects. It is not easy to see how the hostile armies could enter France, with threatened destruction, but in the expectation of that event. The emigrant princes, the *cidevant* nobles, and the nonjuring clergy of France might say, The whole body of our countrymen are united in one firm phalanx, to resist those exclusive privileges we have so long enjoyed; and, however zealous the illustrious potentates of Russia, Prussia, and Austria may be to replace us in the possession of them, yet alas! it is an arduous undertaking, which it is possible our countrymen, united as one man against us, may successfully resist. In this situation, what can be more important to our cause? What could enliven our hopes so much,

as the court of Britain adopting our cause? If her armies are not considerable, her resources are great. She can supply the sinews of war. Her national credit, and her system of finance are of so peculiar a structure, that, were she to join cordially in our support, the war might be protracted to an extent, that would exhaust the resources of our countrymen, and they may at length, be necessitated to exchange the calamities of war for those we mean to impose upon them. But though the reception of our friend Calonne, at the British court, and tho' Mr. Burke's abuse of our adversaries, having there obliterated the remembrance of his panegyrics on republicanism, and his insults on royalty, are circumstances which may well warrant us to conclude that our friends are not limited to Germany and Russia; yet alas, in Britain liberty rears her head! There a swinish multitude influences public proceedings, and however cordially some personages may be inclined to support us, yet may they be fearful of doing it in opposition to the public voice. But could our countrymen be induced to destroy the king or queen, then indeed a sudden furor might be raised in the English nation, under cover of which our friends there might adopt our cause. The minister might be then persuaded to come down to the house, and tell them that the death of the king was "*The natural effect of the principles maintained in France,*" and that these principles "*Had brought to a fatal catastrophe a lawful sovereign.*" That "*they had shed the blood of their unfortunate monarch lest the world should be at a loss to know the nature of their system,*" and he may then possibly be induced to call on the nation "*to arrest the progress of such principles, and prevent their contagion,*" Shall we then quietly submit to the limited monarchy now established? Shall we suffer the king, like the English monarchs, to obtain the love of the people, by willingly abandoning the antient prerogatives of the crown, cheerfully acquiescing in the limited power assigned him, and exercising his *veto* in subservience to the public voice, content with the influence and importance he will derive from the immense civil list they have allotted him? Shall we suffer him, like the English queen Mary, to concur in the seizure of the temporalities of the clergy, of that

religion, to which, like her, he is attached? Or, shall we tempt him to unite his interest with ours, and, by holding out to him the hope of powerful foreign assistance, induce him to use the power still left in his hands? Our countrymen will suppose that the hostile armies invading and desolating France in his name, have his concurrence. The people will be enraged, a convention will take place, and thus the king must inevitably fall. This may induce the friends of a limited monarchy to strengthen our party; but, at all events, if the nation should still be united against us, and the invading armies should be repulsed, still the king being destroyed, and a democratic republic established, Mr. Burke and our other friends in England will thence be enabled to render our countrymen more generally odious to the English nation, than is possible while France continues a limited monarchy. Thus the death of the king will become the means of inducing the English, to engage in a war, to restore us to those riches and privileges, of which they have long since deprived their own nobility and clergy. The riches of England and Holland will then give energy to the operations of the great and illustrious monarchs of Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Shall we then hesitate to provoke our adversaries to embroil their hands in the blood of the king, and thus abandon for ever the only hope that now remains to us of restoring that antient, that venerable government, which, however odious it might be to the people, we contend, as we have good reason to contend, was most excellent and perfect?

Thus probably, on an accurate examination of the whole train of circumstances attending this event, we shall find a new order of criminals appear to our view, of a very different description from the national convention, the municipal officers, or the mob of Paris. And it will not be easy to procure the acquittal of those criminals before an impartial judicature, unless it can be shewn that the invasion of France, and the duke of Brunswick's manifesto were not such proceedings, as, in the common order of human events, might reasonably be expected to produce the death of the king.

But before we sit in judgment on the murderers of the king of France, whoever they may be, it is absolutely

requisite, for preserving the semblance of justice, that we should be certain that we ourselves are perfectly free from guilt. Here methinks a burst of indignation spreads around me and all with one voice, exclaim, Do you charge us with the guilt of a deed which appears to have excited universal horror? And when our court has been cloathed in the ensigns of sorrow, and the semblance of woe.—But are not these proofs of innocence equivocal?—What vile slanderer! Can'st thou pretend that the British nation has taken any concern in these measures, which have brought the unhappy monarch to the scaffold? Did we interfere in the affairs of France, till that melancholy event took place? Did we not stand by, calm spectators of all these circumstances which produced the tremendous scene? It is true! And on this exculpatory defence I found my charge!—If a crime be about to be perpetrated, and we use not those endeavours in our power, and which we lawfully may, to prevent its commission, we become partners in the guilt. If we stand by while the deadly ingredients are preparing, and dash them not to the ground. If we see the Assassin uplift his poniard, and, though it be in our power, wrest it not from his hand, we become equally guilty, as if we administered the empoisoned draught, or plunged the murderous weapon.

With this indisputable position in our mind, let us review the circumstances. In doing this it will not be necessary to defend the French revolution in any respect. Admitting we perceived the government as formed by the constituting assembly, to contain in it the latent seeds of danger to the king.—That the embryo principles, which have since produced such deadly fruit, lay then open to our discriminating eye.—Let it then be considered, that this dangerous government was voluntarily submitted to our revival. When the French nation proffered us the office of mediator, we could without violating the law of nations, without insulting the independency of a great nation, have then pointed out the defects in the new established government. We might then have advised the rooting out any germinating seeds of danger to the king, and the new formed government; our recommendation would have

come with propriety, for it was requested, our interference would then have had weight, for it was in a critical moment, when the limited monarchy was threatened from adverse quarters. On the one hand it was threatened with destruction by the invading armies in support of the ancient despotism, and on the other by the powerful republican party, in opposition to whom the limited monarchy had been established. The friends of the then existing government would, doubtless, have been desirous to have listened to our friendly council, and then have guarded the state from those threatened dangers, and themselves from Prussian prisons. Enemies as they were to the ancient despotism, yet were they anxious to support that limited authority of the monarch, which the constituting assembly had deemed expedient. But Mr. Pitt contends, that "by the law of nations, we have a right to interfere in the concerns of other countries, so far as to oblige them to establish a form of government and terminate anarchy." How stands the fact even compared with his own principle? France when threatened with invasion by the combined armies, was possessed of a government, which Mr. Pitt acknowledges to have had apparently the concurrence of the people. This government was threatened by a foreign force, and a domestic faction; the one would naturally operate to increase the other. At this critical period we are called on to mediate, to endeavour by accommodating the pretensions of the adverse parties to give permanency to this government, and prevent that anarchy which threatened to arise from this hostile attack, and, the necessary result of anarchy, the destruction of the king: we refuse to interfere; we decline, though solicited, to take any measure to prevent this anarchy, and we suffer it to take place, with its unavoidable consequence, the death of the king; and then make this anarchy, which we refused to prevent, a pretence for joining in the hostile attack, and thereby perpetuate the evils we ought to have prevented; and now avenge the death of the king of France, though we declined taking any measures for his preservation. If to interfere in the government of neighbouring states be a right, it is also a duty; because it must be incumbent on us

to exercise it on proper occasions, and not merely as caprice or interest may suggest. *Grotius* in 20th cap. of his 2d book, where, on the authority of *Hercules*, he lays down the dangerous doctrine of one state interfering with another, seems to doubt his principle, for he observes, "*It is to be noted that those wars, which are undertaken for exacting punishment, unless the injuries be very great, very manifest, or backed with some other cause, are always suspected to be unjust.*" How much more than suspected, must it be, when, though requested, we have declined to prevent the evils we now pretend to punish?

So far then as it was evident that the death of the king of France would result from the government formed by the constituting assembly being subverted, and one more democratical rising in its place, so far our declining any lawful measures, which promised to give permanency to that government, constitutes us guilty of his death. And if his death resulted from errors in the limited monarchy, then, as far as our mediation might have corrected those errors, so far are we in that case accountable for the consequences.

We have not ground to say, that our acceptance of the mediation would have produced no effect; for, as the attack on France was to effect a change in their government, the submitting the dispute to mediation implied a disposition to admit of some change for the sake of peace, and we know not what concession might have been made to obtain our alliance and friendship. When all the nations of Europe armed against them, it might be wise and prudent to adopt a more democratic form of government than otherwise might have been expedient, and thus risk a temporary anarchy, in order to give an energy to the people against their foreign enemies. And though it is not to be supposed that any change which the French might have adopted, even had it been an exact copy of the English constitution, would have much reconciled the Austrian, Prussian, or Russian monarchs; yet had they found that the government of France had our cordial approbation, and they had no hopes of our assistance in subverting it, we may reasonably imagine they would not have been very ready to disturb .

As in endeavouring to prevent the late convulsions in France, we should have had the greatest prospect of success, so it is equally evident that to avenge them is totally impracticable. Supposing us to meet with success equal to our most sanguine wishes; admitting, that according to Mr. Burke's directions, we wage eternal war, desolate France, and lay Paris in ruins; will our sword in this wide devastation discriminate the innocent from the guilty? Alas! it must be the innocent, chiefly, on whom our vengeance will fall. Was the death of the king perpetrated by a faction who have usurped the authority? or, have certain miserable philosophers, by their speculations, produced this melancholy scene? Will our vengeance select this faction, or these philosophers for punishment? Before our armies shall have entered France, the national assembly that voted the death of the king will be dissolved, and we shall be carrying on a war against another government, which may possibly deplore that event equally with ourselves. The impossibility of punishing the real criminals, manifests the absurdity of attempting to punish crimes by a war, and proves that such a war must in its nature be unjust.

Conscious of this, many contend that the death of the king is not the cause of the war, but that it results solely from the national aggressions of France. But this cannot be admitted, when we consider that it constitutes the principal part of those invectives which have been delivered in the Senate to prompt us to a war; that it was brought before it by the king himself; and that immediately on the news of the fact being perpetrated, the French minister was forbid the kingdom, and the royal message for a war armament delivered. From these circumstances we may rather infer that it is this event which has actually precipitated us into a war, not that we are to imagine it to be the real motive; Lord Auckland's memorial, states, that the French government had given us umbrage from the beginning, but it was not til this event took place, that the war appears to have been resolved on, however much it might by some have been desired.

As punishing nations by war is unjust from the consideration of its confounding the innocent with the

guilty, it is no less so from its being totally destitute of the essential property of punishment, *the prevention of future crimes*; because, there is no system of laws by which the punishment is regulated, nor any jurisdiction whose authority is recognized. The Prince of Orange did not undertake his expedition, because it was consonant to any law which had been sanctioned by the monarchs of Europe, nor was he deterred from it because Monmouth and his adherents had been severely punished for similar attempts. Those, who, in governing nations, or commanding armies, perpetrate crimes;—those who assume, or subvert dominion, do so in consequence of the power they possess; and those who are concerned in any revolt, will govern themselves merely on the circumstances of that, in which they are engaged, and not of any prior one. The national convention were not deterred from executing the king, because the murderers of Charles the first were brought to the scaffold; and should we be able to select the persons concerned in the death of the French king, and punish them, it does not follow, that those who in future may have the disposal of kings, will treat them with greater lenity. The severity with which James the second treated his nephew, Monmouth, did not occasion his daughters to manifest any great tenderness to the deposed monarch; nor did the severe punishment inflicted on the murderers of some of the Scottish kings, prevent twelve of them from being killed in succession.

If, however we be determined to take cognizance of this crime, notwithstanding we can be authorized by no principle whatever, and though our threatened vengeance can be productive of no future good, even to kings themselves.—If we do assume the judgment seat, it behoves us to conduct ourselves, becoming the important situation in which we have placed ourselves; and more peculiarly so, as our conduct bears a most suspicious aspect. Why, it may be asked, is this single, solitary crime, particularly selected as the sole object of our indignation?—Attend—Lord Grenville replies—*“The recent transaction at Paris has filled all Europe with amazement and horror, and has been received in this country with a degree of feeling and emotion that makes me glory in being an Englishman.”*—Indeed!

happy news, that there is such a paucity of crimes in the world, that the attention of all Europe should be so totally engrossed by one. Happy, happy nations of Europe! whose diversified forms of government and multifarious systems of laws are all so admirably adapted to secure human felicity, insure the safety of mankind, and prevent the commission of crimes, that they are thus so universally struck with *horror and amazement* at this single offence, perpetrated in a foreign jurisdiction. The empress of Russia, who, I presume stands foremost, almost petrified with astonishment at the murder of a king, cannot, I dare say, find through all her wide extended territories, one act of injustice, one scene of misery, that can be produced as a counter-part.

Not in the least meaning to dispute this universal justice, this exemption from crime, which pervades the empires of Russia and Germany, and which has made it requisite for the happy subjects of those empires to extend their views to Paris for an object to excite their *amazement* and their *horror*; yet may the propriety of the people of this country joining in it admit of some consideration.

It might indeed possibly be doubted whether our own virtue were not rather a more rational ground of glory, than any *emotion* or any *feeling* respecting the crimes of others. It must indeed be acknowledged, that to express the warmest emotions, and the most indignant feelings against *them*, is a far easier task than to pursue the thorny path of virtue, and steadily resist the temptations to which we are exposed. Thus we execrate an Inkle, and we sob and sigh at the tragedy of Oroonoko; yet we could not only perpetrate the facts themselves, but, through every revolving hour from age to age, we can realize the scenes, and re-act them on the wide theatre of the world, for the sake of gratifying our appetite with a despicable luxury. Let it then be asked, if we have no other, no clearer evidence of our purity, than our amazement and our horror, our feeling and our emotion, on the death of the king of France.

The extent of our conquests surpasses those of Cæsar and of Alexander; and cannot those wide extended dominions be appealed to, as proofs of the moderation

with which we exercise power, the firmness with which we resist every temptation of oppression and injustice, the sacredness with which we regard the lives and property of those who are at our mercy, and the vigilance with which we protect the innocent? If not, "*our most marked and animated indignation at a late transaction at Paris,*" instead of being our glory, will prove us to be mean, as we are vile, base as we are criminal. It will prove we possess the despicable art of a prostitute, who attempts to conceal her deviations from the path of virtue, by invectives on the unchastity of others. Is there then, through these vast dominions, no evil to be found of equal magnitude to the murder of the king of France? Has no crime been perpetrated that calls for our swift vengeance, that we are thus necessitated to go into other jurisdictions, to traverse foreign countries, in search of criminals? Are there none equal to the national convention, and the mob of Paris to be found among those who are under our protection, and subject to our authority? Alas! were the French to seize all the kings and queens, and emperors and empresses, and clergy, and nobles of the continent of Europe, and involve them all in one general carnage, dreadfully, monstrous, as might be the deed, it would sink beneath our notice, were it compared with those scenes which the West-india islands present to our view. Lord Grenville, perhaps, will glory in being an Englishman, when he compares the slow, the solemn, the cautious deliberation, with which that body, who now possesses Mr. Burke's hyperbolic praises, conduct the proceedings respecting those enormities of which we ourselves are guilty, with the promptitude and ardor with which they can express their *marked and animated indignation* at the crimes of others. Infinite is the difference, it seems, between forming a judgment of other peoples conduct and our own. No sooner are they told of the death of the king of France, than instantly they can resolve, "*that it was an atrocious act which must be viewed by every nation of Europe as an outrage of religion, justice, and humanity.*" And can as instantly resolve to assure his majesty, "*That impressed with these sentiments, they will enable his majesty to augment his forces, to act as circumstances may require*

" *at such an important juncture.*" But it seems they have not leisure to prosecute the inquiry any farther on the Slave Trade, because they are so extremely busy in pouring out vengeance on the murderers of the king of France.

Well! but I am told, the crimes to which I allude are common ordinary offences, but at Paris a *King* has been murdered. "*An innocent monarch has been sacrificed in violation of every principle of justice.*"—When I see a man unjustly deprived by his fellow mortals, of that life which his Creator gave, and which he alone has a right to take away, I indeed see a tremendous sight, and it were to be wished that it were an event as uncommon as it is awful. But if we be called on to pronounce the murder of the king of France, "*to be an atrocious scene, unparalleled in the annals of the world.*"—We must then demand, what are the peculiar circumstances attending it? *The being deprived of life unjustly* is a general definition of murder. But I am again reminded that it is a *King*, and not an African, but a *European* monarch, whose loss we deplore. True, but I know not that impartial justice will much consider that the human form is wrapped in purple, or that the brow is encircled with a diadem. I am indeed ready to admit, that in addition to the crime of murder, which every unjust privation of life implies, there may attach circumstances of additional criminality, and that additional criminality may arise among other circumstances, from the situation in which the murdered person was placed. But merely his being an *innocent King*, will not raise it above the ordinary level of those murders which occur every hour of the day in our West-india islands, and in the holds of our Corsairs. The former government of France, in which Mr. Burke says they might glory, perpetrated thousands of murders far more atrocious than the murder of the king of France, supposing him to have been innocent. But it may be remarked that from the nature of royalty the crimes of kings must be extremely equivocal. Actions may be deemed innocent by them, merely because they are such as other monarchs have committed, or because the laws of the country had not recognized the crimes of kings, yet may their subjects justly deem them criminal.

When Lord Grenville tells us that "*this innocent monarch has been cruelly murdered by a self-constituted power, without having violated any existing law, contrary to every principle of justice, for that his judges were parties in the cause, they were legislators, accusers, judges, and jurors.*" He says no more than must necessarily be true of every suffering monarch. In *this kingdom, in the space of about 800 years, upwards of thirty kings and queens have been killed, besides dethronements, banishments, proscriptions, sentences of bastardy, &c.* Now will Lord Grenville give us an account of the regular processes against them? Will he favor us with an account of the parties, the accusers, the judges, and the jurors? Will he shew that the BRAVE, MAGNANIMOUS, JUST, LIBERAL, and HUMANE people of this island have proceeded in any *one* case, more consonantly to existing laws, and the principles of justice, than the people of *France* have against the deceased king?

When calamities fall on *monarchs*; so far from its exciting our *amazement* and *astonishment*, we might rather consider them as being from their situation, most peculiarly exposed to *violence* and *injustice*. If seated on their thrones by power, when that power fails them, they must necessarily become the most forlorn, and most helpless of the human race: no laws to which they can appeal: no judicature to grant them redress: no sanctuary they can depend upon for refuge. If they have the misfortune to escape a speedy termination of their woes by death, they become the sport of fortune, a wandering or a degraded spectacle, insulted and trampled on in their misery.

If then those experiments in government, which are going forward in the world, should at length prove that the government of nations, the preservation of property, the benefit of society, do not absolutely require a *regal order*. If no great injury would result to mankind from its abolition, it might then possibly become a question, not unworthy consideration; *whether it be compatible with humanity, to dress out the gaudy trappings of a throne, to ensnare our fellow creatures; thus tempting them to ascend a dangerous eminence, from whence to be precipitated, must be calamitous, in proportion to the extent of the power they possessed, and the splendor and the adulation with which they had been surrounded.—FINIS.*

A DISCOURSE

ON

NATIONAL FASTS,

Particularly in reference to that of

APRIL 19, 1793,

ON OCCASION OF THE

WAR against FRANCE.

By W. FOX.

THE THIRD EDITION.

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A Discourse on National Fasts, by W. Fox.

Author of the Address on abstaining from West India Sugar and Rum—Interest of Great Britain respecting the French War—Thoughts on the Death of the King of France, &c.

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OF all the wonderful absurdities which the history of man presents to our view, perhaps; there is none so extraordinary as the associating of religious rites with those criminal purposes to which we should imagine the rudest and simplest ideas of religion must be inimical. *Adam*, when he first transgressed against his maker, very naturally hid himself amongst the trees of the garden: but his more profligate posterity, hardened in guilt, when associated together to commit any crime of peculiar enormity, and extensive mischief, boldly rush into his presence, claim him as a partner in their guilt, and demand his assistance in perpetrating their crimes.

One would naturally imagine that, when men were determined to give a loose to their criminal passions, they might be satisfied with immolating their fellow-creatures, by thousands, and by millions, at the shrine of their ambition, their cruelty, or their avarice. And we may surely ask why they should wantonly and unnecessarily insult their maker?—but we will have the candour to suppose, that they do not believe there exists any supreme being, whom they can insult by thus profaning his name. We will admit that they consider religion as a mere political engine. Yet may we not ask, whether it be not degrading the State to dress it out in the tattered remnants of a religion which we despise? we may give to our crimes a factitious glare. *Captain Macbeth* is not so despicable a character as *Mother Cole*. Let it then be considered whether it be not more becoming the character of men to give to our crimes the manly boldness of the former character, than, with the latter, to form an unnatural compound of vice and religion.

The history of this degradation of the human character might not be unamusing, were not its wickedness too extreme, and its impiety too shocking. It must be

observed that, though this association of religion and vice is to be too extensively traced in the history of man, yet in some cases, something may be offered in its extenuation. That in a rude state of society, the druids should, by their religious orgies, maintain an authority and influence over mankind was not very extraordinary; and the fraud might possibly not be injurious, at a period when there existed nothing that bore any resemblance to civil government, and when kings were merely leaders of armies. Nor need we much wonder that the Roman emperors combined the priesthood with the imperial dignity; *they* might with great propriety be considered as the representatives of the deities *they* acknowledged: plunder and carnage might properly be conducted under *their* auspices.

It is in assuming the religion of *Christ* for such a purpose, that human depravity becomes peculiarly manifested; for, were it deemed expedient to associate the black catalogue of human crimes with religion, one would have thought that the Christian religion would hardly have been selected for such a purpose. *Mahomed* had the good sense to perceive its unsuitness for a national religion, and therefore he altered and adapted it for that purpose. The church of Rome have adopted a plan nearly similar, by concealing the nature and import of the scripture from the people, and thereby have avoided shocking the feelings of mankind, by promulgating a religion totally incompatible with their avowed principles of conduct. Bishop Burnet observes, "*That the reformed churches have added new abuses to the old ones,*" and adds, "*That growing atheism and impiety is daily gaining ground, not only among us, but indeed all Europe over.*" Certainly measures have been adopted since the reformation, which seem extremely well adapted to such an end.

To promulgate amongst the people a religion against which every national act militates; to be continually at war; yet profess the gospel of peace; to be ranging round the world to spread, misery, desolation, famine and war; yet to place before us for an example him who went about doing good. To have the same government and legislature, who are perpetrating those deeds,

enacting penal laws to compel us to profess a belief in the very religion that condemns them, are certainly admirable contrivances to destroy every religious, and every moral principle. Nor, is it less observable that, because *Jesus* has declared that his kingdom is not of this world, it is determined that it shall be of this world; because he has told us, that his disciples shall be hated for his name sake, they therefore enact penalties to compel them to profess their belief in him; as we are informed by him, that his church shall consist of a remnant, chosen out of all nations, and tongues, and people, with infinite propriety, it is made to consist of whole nations; and, to finish the picture, because *Jesus* has proclaimed himself to be the head over all things to his church, the *king* is proclaimed to be the head of it.

If it is in this character his *majesty* has issued a proclamation, and if as such we obey it, certainly then it will not be easy to discover a more effectual mode of manifesting that we obey him, not as an earthly monarch but as seated on the throne of *Jehovah*, than by a national fast: because, (except circumcision) national fasts constitute the most prominent feature in that œconomy wherein *God* condescended to become the head of a national church. When that institution was dissolved, by the authority that formed it, no method could be contrived more conveniently to prove our contempt of that authority, than by continuing the observances of that institution. This method of trampling on the divine authority was very early resorted to; the mystery of iniquity began to work even in the apostles time; it was then contended that the *Gentiles* should be circumcised, and keep the law. *Paul's* judgment on this subject was indeed something different, for he tells the *Galatians* “*If they were circumcised Christ should profit them nothing*” yet had circumcision divine sanction, and *Paul* himself circumcised *Timothy*: but to observe divine institutions otherwise than as *God* has appointed is as criminal as introducing human inventions. To add to or to diminish his commands are equally rebellion against him. Hence to observe any fast otherwise than as we are authorised by *Christ*, or his apostles

is to trample under foot that gospel which has been promulgated to man, as the source of his eternal hope.

A *Christian* must not merely decline joining in a fast, but even start with horror at the thought, from the consideration that amidst all the corruptions with which the national professions of christianity abound, fasting is that subject which has been peculiarly selected by them to be placed in the most farcical point of view, and so degrade, and to insult not only religion and morality but the common sense and language of mankind. When the nations of *Europe* became what is called *Christian*, the conductors of the business had some difficulties to combat. To adopt intire a religion they did not believe, and which they only resorted to for interested purposes, could hardly be expected. And as the religion already existed, they were not at liberty to frame it *de novo*, they were therefore necessitated to re-organize it: but as the original was not extremely well adapted to the purposes to which it was to be applied, the transmutation was not very easy.

Fasting was a remarkable instance of the adroitness with which the affair was conducted. It was a term of very obvious import, even to the most illiterate; it could not possibly mean any thing but abstinence from food: so it has invariably been understood by mahommedans, and by every people who practice it, and who believe the religion they profess. To change this obvious meaning, one would have thought, would have been impossible; yet was this indispenibly necessary. Abstinence from food could hardly be expected, from Kings, and Emperors, Pope's and Cardinals, it was therefore boldly resolved, that fasting should mean feasting on the most delicate viands, in distinction from common and ordinary food; and thus fasting was by this notable expedient rendered perfectly palatable even to an epicure; and when we recollect that this curious definition of fasting has, like the English constitution, been framed by the deliberative wisdom of our ancestors, transmitted through a succession of ages, and sanctioned by happy experience; if any bold innovator should dare to intimate, that oysters, eels, dories, and cray fish, are not peculiarly adapted

to fasting and mortification; it may be hoped that we shall still preserve our reverence for antiquity, and carefully guard our minds from being corrupted, by the detestable innovations of reason and philosophy.

Despicably extravagant as this mummary may be, yet such is the influence of bad principles, that modes of fasting not much inferior in absurdity have been adopted, by persons who appear to have some reverence for the gospel of *Christ*. Thus, some call it a fast day to delay their breakfast a few hours, some omit a meal, others eat nothing till dinner, while others have only a slight repast in the day, delaying their principal meal to the evening. As such modes of fasting are the result of whim and caprice, it is no wonder they are so diversified; and, if they are deemed fasting, it can only be because the usual mode of feeding is gluttony. The most abstemious of these methods of fasting correspond with the regular manner of living in other countries; the Romans, and many other nations, partook not of any substantial meal until the evening.

As the methods of fasting are thus diversified, so some have an ingenious method of keeping the national fast without fasting at all. They will, indeed, go to church, or meeting, and thus the ceremony ends. But Dr. *Price's* mode of keeping the royal fasts, during the *American* war, was still more curious. The Doctor punctually kept them, but used to make a small mistake, for, instead of praying for the success of his majesty's arms, he used to deprecate and deplore it as an impending calamity. Viewing it in that light, it would certainly have been highly criminal in him to have observed it in any other manner: but why observe it at all?

Obedience to the government under which we live is a duty strongly inculcated in the scriptures, and it ever justly claims our regard, except when it trenches on the superior duty we owe to God, rather than to Man. Hence, as it is not the proper office of the civil magistrate to determine when, or how, man should worship his maker, and he cannot assume such an office without invading the prerogatives of the Lord of the whole earth, so it should seem that we cannot, in any shape, or in any degree, obey such commands without recog-

nizing that assumed authority, and thereby rebelling against heaven.

The peculiar nature of christianity is totally repugnant to a combination of religion with national contests. As men, living in the world, we cannot but have our political opinions, and by those opinions we must be governed when our duty calls on us to take a part in the affairs of this world. But the minds of Christians will be far otherwise employed whenever they approach the awful presence of *Jehovah*. It is true, since praying has become an art, and practised as a trade, much ingenuity has been discovered in inventing topics for prayer. Yet numerous as are the passages, in the epistles of the apostles, where prayer is mentioned; they uniformly refer to spiritual blessings, or to those miraculous and peculiar circumstances appropriate to those times. Christians were commanded to pray for kings, and all in authority: but it was that they might live quiet and peaceable lives, in godliness and honesty. And if they asked for food, it was only as daily bread, which, by supporting that life which had been forfeited by their transgressions, was a continual manifestation of the divine long suffering towards them. And when *Paul* prayed, night and day for the *Thessalonians*, it was that they might increase and abound in love, and might be unblameable in holiness before God. If then *Christian* prayer be thus limited, profane in the extreme must it be for us to apply to heaven that our favorite army may destroy the adverse one. It must, even supposing we were thoroughly acquainted with the merits of the dispute, and the purpose meant to be effected, and were satisfied that those disputes, and that purpose, was perfectly consonant to the commonly received law of nations, which certainly bears no great resemblance to the law of *Christ*. To return good for evil; forgive injuries; do good to all men; form no very prominent feature in it. The New Testament is extremely defective in respect that it gives us no idea of a *just* war; it even speaks of all war, as arising from our lusts; yet the principal object of *Grotius*, is to shew from whence wars may lawfully originate. But it is remarkable, that in the present war

we are perfect strangers to its purpose. In former wars, though the people were never in the secret of their real object, and consequently while they were telling God it was just and necessary for one purpose, which was avowed, government was prosecuting it for one totally different. Yet, this must be admitted, that a specific object was always held out. A nation was to be weakened, because it was strong; or it was to be destroyed because it was weak. Another was to be divided, and another was to have a barrier. One to be attacked, because they had the assurance to say they had not injured us; and another, because we imagined they would resent the injuries we had done them. Some nations we attacked, because they made treaties we did not like; and others, because the treaties we made for them they did not choose to adopt. Sometimes we were informed, a country would be of use to us, and therefore we must seize it; and then we must seize another, because without it the first would be useless. Some wars were engaged in to protect our piracies, and our smugglers; one to aggrandise our colonies, and then another to weaken them. But in the present war, we are perfect strangers to the object it is to obtain. Mr. *Burke* says, we ought to be so. Admit it. Yet surely then we ought not to be called on to pray for success on his majesty's arms, without knowing how they are to be employed; and to assure God that their object is perfectly just and necessary, while we are ignorant of what that object is. All we can possibly know is, that two thousand men, from *England*, are to be joined to sixteen thousand more, which the king of *England* has hired of the elector of *Hanover*; and that these men are to be employed somewhere in killing their fellow-creatures. This is the sum total of our knowledge on this business. But this circumstance certainly possesses one advantage; for, as nobody knows how his majesty's arms are to be employed, every body may suppose they are to be employed to his own mind, and every body is left at liberty to assert, as it suits his purpose at the time to contend they ought to be employed. Hence, any man might have asserted, that they were only to have been employed in protecting *Holland*, and the *Scheld* . ~~at~~

and two months since he could not have been contradicted. Then, it might have been asserted, they were to secure *Flanders*, as a barrier for *Holland*. When that was effected, it might be pretended, we were only to deprive them of their other conquests, as Mr. *Pitt* had declared that it was not intended to meddle with the internal affairs of *France*. But as she will probably have abandoned her remaining trifling acquisitions, before the fast shall have taken place, it will then evidently follow that the success we pray for, and the object of that war which we shall then tell God, is both just and necessary; is, not that which Mr. *Pitt* declared to be the object, but that which he expressly disclaimed, an interference with the internal affairs of *France*. In such case, it must be inferred that Mr. *Pitt* is not in the secret of the present measures, and that he has not their conduct and control; or, that he said the thing that was not. In the first moment in which the foreign armies enter the territories of *France*, it will be for him to come forward, and explain his tremendously ambiguous expression of "*pushing France at all points*:" but, alas! nothing will be explained but by the event. The authors of this tragedy know how to conduct the plot too well, to suffer the *dénouement* to be discovered till towards the conclusion of the piece. Is *France* and *Poland*, and every country where principles of liberty may dawn, and which may endanger surrounding despotisms, to be dismembered? If so, *England* must be included: from her have emanated those principles, and never can the despotism of *Europe* be secure while there they are suffered to remain. It will not be sufficient even to restore the ancient despotism of *France*. Governments must be formed both there and here, in comparison of which the former despotism of *France* was liberty itself. For, let it be recollected, that from the art of printing, all the evils which are now deplored have resulted; and if that art be not totally annihilated, if it be suffered to exist even in that limited state which it did in *France*, all those consequences which have already resulted from it will again recur. But, if the continental princes should be able, with our assistance, effectually to subjugate *France*, the whole plan may be easily executed.

Conceited indeed, must be that *Englishman*, who imagines that this country would, in such case, be able to resist the confederacy:

If then printing be totally and effectually put a stop to—If by a general alliance amongst the sovereigns of Europe, which this war, if successful, seems well-adapted to produce, they agree to have large, well paid, and well trained armies, not to be stationed in their native lands, but in those to the language of which they are strangers; and those armies to be mutually removed from country to country, to prevent their being connected with the natives; then, and only then, can this plan be effected. Thus, and thus only, can the despotism of *Europe* be rendered permanent. If a trait of liberty, if even *semi-despotism* be suffered to exist in any one country, that country will become a germinating seed, from whence will again spring up all these mischiefs which we now deplore; and all our laudable exertions will terminate, in producing only these subordinate and trivial evils, the loss of millions of lives, and the spreading misery and desolation around us. The power and limits of *France* are trivial circumstances; and Mr. *Burke*, with great propriety, urges us to *wage eternal war*, or to *extirpate*. But war cannot be *eternal*; it must then terminate in extirpation, and that extirpation must be extended as far as the slenderest fibre of liberty can be traced. If this be not the plan, it is childish in the extreme—if it be—But I am silent—because my knowledge of language is inadequate to the task of combining appropriate expressions to convey my feelings. If indeed it were to be supposed possible, that the confederacy against *France* should finally and fatally prevail, and if it were lawful to approach the Divine Being respecting the events of a transitory world: In contemplation of the threatened horrors we should throw ourselves at his feet, trembling in every limb, and bleeding at every pore, and pour out our requests, not in those monstrous and tautological forms which insult God, and degrade Man, but in those words which flow from the energetic feelings of the mind, or in those far more expressive modes, flowing from the fulness of the soul, in comparison with which all words are weak

and puerile. Thus it should seem that there ought to be some specific and appropriate meaning annexed to the words "*success to his majesty's arms*," before we presume to make it a subject of address to the Deity.—One man means by it, securing the *Scheldt* to *Holland*, another *Flanders* for her barrier, a third supposes it includes *Hanover*, some mean by it distressing and weakening *France*, some dismembering and partitioning her, some imposing on her one kind of government, and some another, while others mean depriving her of all government, and annihilating her as a nation, and some include in the idea of "*success to his majesty's arms*" the eradicating certain principles wherever they are to be found, or wherever they can be traced. To approach the Deity in a form of words, to which such diversified ideas are annexed by the worshippers, they must have a strange taste for religious worship indeed who can approve. Did we worship *Jupiter*, it might be amusing to imagine, how merry the god would make himself with the discordant ideas of his votaries, and that he might humourously dismiss them, with assurances that he would grant their requests, when he could understand what they meant, and when they could agree amongst themselves on the subject.

We will admit, with Mr. *Burke*, that it is not fit, nor becoming the dignity of government, to let the people into the secret of what is the real object of the war; or, what is to be the result of success attending his majesty's arms; that it is sufficient for them to be told stories about atheists, republicans, and levellers; *French* principles and daggers; to be one moment told that the *French* are an object of our pity and contempt, and the next of terror and alarm. We will admit also with the *English Solomon*, *James 1st.* That "*It does not become subjects to pry into affairs of state.*" Yet, surely, something may be urged, if not in defence, yet in extenuation of our presumption; if, when his majesty orders us to pray to God for *success* on his arms, we humbly ask how they are to be employed, and what consequences are to result from the success we are to ask. For, as mischievous consequences have sometimes resulted from the success of a conquering army, we ought

to ask what object is to be attained? and what consequences are to result from the *success* we are ordered to ask for? And, before we presume to tell God the war is just and necessary, we ought to have satisfaction as to the specific nature of the war, and that such is its proper description. For, though it is alledged to be so by high authority, yet that authority is human, and consequently fallible. Under such circumstances, the question assumes a more serious form than even an affair of state. The king must now be considered, not as being *hurled* from his throne, but voluntarily descending from it, and leading his subjects into a presence where he and the meanest of them are on a perfect level. Under such circumstances, surely, we may be permitted to pause at the threshold, and respectfully ask for some evidence that the war be really of that description which we are required to affirm it to be in the presence of *Jehovah*. If, on enquiry, it appears to us not so to be, it then becomes our duty, not only to decline affirming it ourselves, but to urge others to make a similar inquiry, that they may thereby avoid the guilt of asserting a falsehood to God.

To assure God that his majesty's arms will be employed in just and necessary pursuits, may appear rather rash; because it is not quite certain that either intellectual or moral perfection necessarily appertains to royalty. The *glorious* and *immortal William* as readily told us, that it was just and necessary to dismember and partition the Spanish monarchy, as that *most excellent* prince *George Ist.* that it was just and necessary to make war with *Charles XII.* because *Charles* did not like to be deprived of Bremen and Verden.

We may be considered as having been engaged in one continual war ever since the revolution; the intervals of peace may be considered, merely as pauses to recover a little strength; and it is also observable that these peaces have generally been much execrated, and there has always been much clamour and discontent till we have again been suffered to embrue our hands in blood. In other nations the wars originate in the ambition of the prince, in this country the people have uniformly manifested a cannibal ferocity to sit down to the

bloody banquet. These bloody banquets we have uniformly accompanied with fasts and thankgivings, on all these occasions we have solemnly assured God that they were just: that any one of them was so, no one will now be hardy enough to undertake to prove. We have also as constantly besought God to give success to his majesty's arms, for that the cause in which we were engaged was not only *just* but *necessary*. If by necessary was meant that these wars were necessary for producing death, slavery, misery, and desolation, the assertion was true, but if it imported that they were necessary for our safety, or, even for our prosperity, it was demonstrably false, because we have constantly miscarried in the avowed objects for which every one of those wars was undertaken. For, if those wars were necessary for our safety, having miscarried in the objects of them, it follows, that we are now in a ruined situation; on the contrary; if we are now happy and glorious, it also follows, that we lied before God in affirming that those wars were necessary.

But here I am told that, in all I have said, I have proved nothing but my own ignorance. I am told that these things called fasts have no relation to religion; that nobody ever supposed so but a few old women, who were too blind to see, too deaf to hear, and too stupid to understand, what was passing in the world. I shall be told that calling on God is a mere pretext; that the prayers are meant for *Man* not for *God*. A political contrivance to inflame the minds of the people for particular purposes, and to give the clergy an opportunity of disseminating political mischief from their pulpits—Be it so—Admitting that a Swift might tell me that a *Fast* was a *Farce*, yet still I must contend that my objection is valid, because a *Farce* when it becomes prophane ought to excite our horror. A fast certainly is a most convenient mode of disseminating opinions among the people. To call the weaver from his loom, and the husbandman from his plough; to command the hand of industry to stand still, and all business to be suspended through the nation; is of it self sufficient to alarm and to astonish. The fast necessarily becomes the topic of discourse, and the obscurest and remotest vil-

lage in the kingdom becomes the scene of political inquiry. The smith lays aside his hammer, and the taylor his goose; in vain they inquire of each other the cause of the alarm; obscure danger is the most terrific; and to the alehouse they adjourn, to drown their terror, in drinking church and king; there the curate and the excise man instruct the gaping multitude, and while pouring down their throats muddy ale, and poisonous gin, they are told, of the excellence of the constitution in church and state; of its danger from republicans and levellers, from french daggers and french principles, of king-killing, and atheism: paragraphs are read from Burke's Speeches, and from Horsley's Sermon: then all roaring out Rule Britannia, and God save the King, the night passes in praising the constitution, damning dissenters and execrating the French, interlarded with cursing, swearing, quarrelling, and obscenity.

Thus prepared for the fast day, they go to church, and their terrors are confirmed by royal authority. The curate from the desk reads what he had before retailed at the ale-house, and if able to tack together a few paragraphs from newspapers and 30th of January sermons, he ascends the pulpit, and ingratiates himself with the squire and rector, by making a flaming sermon against the *French*, and then finishes the fast-day with the jovial fare at the manor house.

If then fast days are attended with such extensive, such important consequences, they certainly will be resorted to—I mean not to contend, statesmen ought not to observe them. I only ask, on what principle a Christian can observe or countenance them in any shape or in any manner. Should he, while reading the gospel, and rejoicing in it as his present consolation, and his future hope, be told, that this was the only considerable country in Europe where that blessing could be freely enjoyed—that even here, the full enjoyment of his religion was only by sufferance, for that tremendous penal laws hung over him if he refused to conform to a particular religious cult, and though not now executed, yet that the clergy strenuously contended for their continuance, in hope that the period might arrive

in which the state might suffer them to be enforced—should he then be told that a revolution had taken place in a neighbouring nation, which not only must secure us effectually from any danger of returning persecution, but insured the free circulation of the gospel through Europe, that in this, the most important country in Europe, where the gospel had not been suffered to be printed for a century, liberty was now proclaimed to print, and to circulate it; and that Christians were allowed freely to meet together, and to defend and to propagate their faith without restraint—should he be told, that this revolution had led another considerable nation to follow the example, and that from the universality of the french language, it might be expected that similar effects would be produced through Europe, How would he rejoice in this joyful news? How! he only can tell, who knows the gospel of Christ to be the power of God unto salvation; nor would his joy be repressed on being told, that at the same time as Christians were permitted freely to defend the gospel, there existed no pains nor penalties to prevent others from opposing it. Again, let us suppose, that he was told that the sovereigns of Europe had combined together to subvert these governments, and that they had effectually succeeded as to one of them, but having failed as to the other, his majesty had thought proper to join in attacking it, at all points, and had called on the people to pray for success to his arms in this attempt—Can it be thought that he would join with bishops and statesmen in supplicating for success?

But many tell us, that they do not mean to supplicate for success on the war, but that surely there can be no harm in meeting together, and confessing the crying sins of the nation, and supplicating God to avert his judgments from a sinful people. But, I should apprehend it to be criminal, to perform any religious act but from a conviction that God has commanded it. If we are Christians, we shall live under a continual sense of our sinful state, and be continually looking to him for pardon; but to do this once in ten or twenty years, because the king commands it, and because he chooses to exercise the royal prerogative of going to war, seems a

very strange fancy. But it seems we are not only to confess our own sins, but the crying sins of the nation, but what sort of confession that is, I am at a loss to understand. Of what use could it be of for us to confess, if the fact be so, that our laws are framed to produce a wicked and licentious populace, and to protect and foster such amazing systems of wickedness in all quarters of the globe, as the world never before witnessed !

That this nation is guilty of very great and very crying sins we will readily admit; and if, as the proclamation imports, his majesty is at last convinced of it, every quarter of the globe will have reason to rejoice, because at his hands the reformation must be looked for. Indeed it must be acknowledged that the evidences of the abandonment of the great and crying sins of the nation are not very flattering, and a recent event seems to indicate that our crying crimes are rather on the increase. The people of India had been by a charter from the kings of England assigned over as a property; and in consequence of this very modest, just, and reasonable assignment it has been said that as great a number of the inhabitants of India have been destroyed (I must not say murdered) as the whole population of England equals: at this very moment famine rages through the most fertile country in the world, and it is said a million of the inhabitants will fall a sacrifice to it, because we chose to take the cattle from the plough in the countries we had already conquered, to drag our artillery and army baggage to engage in new conquests. With these events before our eyes, this charter is just expired; and his majesty's minister now proposes its renewal; by which, in consideration of 500,000*l. per. annum*, part and portion of the money which is forcibly to be taken from the said people of *India*, which is to be paid into his majesty's Exchequer, the said people of *India* are to be assigned over by his majesty for the further term of twenty years; and the right of ———, and ———, twenty millions of people is to be retailed in *Change-alley* to the best bidders. If this be not deemed a crying sin, it might be necessary for the bishops to compose a *Homily*, to accompany the form of prayer, instructing us a little in the nature of

fin and of repentance. A great mathematician of old, said, that there was no royal way to geometry; so I should imagine that even bishops have not been able to discover a royal way to repentance.

But it seems, we are to beseech heaven to avert some impending calamity, which we are told hangs over us in consequence of these crying sins. What! are we to beseech heaven to avert its judgment, while we persist and glory in our crimes, and while we daily increase them in number and enormity? The housebreaker and footpad, certainly *wish* to escape punishment, but surely there never existed one so daringly impious, as to put up such a petition to heaven, while he grasped the fruits of his iniquity, and persisted in the continuance of his criminal pursuits. But what are these impending calamities and threatened judgments? I perceive them not, we seem to be gloriously triumphant in our pursuits: did ever any nation spread such wide, such uniform misery and desolation through the globe, did ever any people reap such rich reward.

But, perhaps, I shall be told that, when his majesty and his ministers tell us to bewail the sins of the nation, they do not mean that they have committed any themselves; that, though *national* sins may seem to imply, sins committed by public authority, yet that good subjects should take it for granted, that the supreme head of the state is perfectly pure, and that all its acts are as pure as the source from whence they flow. It might indeed seem rather unreasonable that those who admonish us of our sins, should claim an exemption as to their own: but then it ought to be considered, that, as it may be proposed making a considerable addition to our foreign crimes, it may be requisite to balance the *foreign* by calling on us to diminish the *home* consumption of our guilt.

But let it be considered that, whatever importance our pride may stimulate us to assume, yet if we continue to be a curse to mankind, what aspiration can more properly arise from the heart, than that this island might be shaken to its center, and overwhelmed with the surrounding waves.

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A DISCOURSE *occasioned by the* FAST.

WHATEVER may be the final issue of the French Revolution, or with whatever circumstances it may be accompanied, yet will one important consequence necessarily result. Every important principle of Government, of Morals, and of Social order will be brought in review before the public, and subjected to minute investigation, and in whatever obscurity the discussion may for a while be involved, yet, is there but little doubt, of its finally terminating in just and accurate views being extensively disseminated. As the endeavour to suppress the *French Republic* seems not to promise much success; we have the hope of seeing its effects brought to the fair test of actual experiment, which, like experiments in all other branches of knowledge, will tend to elucidate what theoretical disputants have involved in confusion.

The West India slavery is one of the most interesting of those subjects, as well from its importance, as from its supposed difficulty. For a series of years it has engaged the unremitting attention of the several branches of our well balanced constitution; and to them, at least, it appears so extremely difficult to determine whether we shall still continue to murder and enslave the inhabitants of *Africa*, that like the inquiry of the ancient Philosopher into the nature of God; the difficulty seems to increase in proportion as we proceed in the inquiry.

Under such circumstances it might have been imagined, that we should have rejoiced to have seen a neighbouring nation bring a question which had so much puzzled us to an issue, and prove the comparative value of Slavery and Freedom as principles in actual operation, while we awaited the event to avail ourselves of the knowledge to be derived from their adventurous experiment.

If, as is generally supposed, the West India colonies be the foundation of the wealth and naval power both of France and England; and the emancipation of the Slaves would be the destruction of those colonies, then, surely it might be imagined we should exult, that those whom we choose to consider as our natural enemies have adopted a measure attended with such ruin to themselves; leaving this great source of wealth and power almost solely in our hands. If, as is supposed, emancipation would be injurious to the Negroes themselves, and that our Negroes are happy and contented in the state of Slavery, as is asserted, then, what a glorious triumph have the French Jacobins afforded us; destitute of cultivation or ordre, we should then see Freedom in the French Colonies, producing the predicted baneful effects: the Negroes must decrease from year to year, whilst in our Colonies they would increase in numbers and in happiness, under the kind protection of their owners: the dreadful mischief of Freedom could not then have been deemed imaginary, its fatal effects might have been then

appealed to, and have effectually silenced the despicable advocates of the Rights of Man.

How then shall we explain the abhorrence and contempt with which this Decree is viewed in the British Senate, where not one individual appears to defend it. Mr- Pitt who has been declaiming for years, that "*This Slavery was the most extensive calamity recorded in the History of the World, and was only another name for fraud, robbery and murder!*" now boldly comes forward, and not only declares, that this determination of the French to terminate this system of fraud, robbery and murder, is weak, absurd and improvident; but proposes sending an Armament to bind those chains which have been broken, to enslave those who have been just made free. He will not even wait to see whether freedom will be attended with those baneful effects which have been predicted; with such abhorrence he contemplates the measure, that he will not even suffer the experiment to take place, though its injurious effects, if any, must be experienced by our enemies.

However extraordinary this may appear, yet can it excite no surprise in those who are acquainted with the nature and motives of the different parties, who have agitated this question amongst us. The long and desultory harangues upon cruelty and injustice, the volumes of evidence, by which those charges have been brought home to our Colonists, have, indeed, occasioned many to suppose that some few individuals in the British Senate reprobated our Colonial Slavery, and were anxious to remove it; but, alas! no such French principle was ever for a single moment entertained. To secure, perpetuate and extend the Slavery have been their sole objects, and the difference between the Abolitionists and their Adversaries have merely been, how these valuable ends might be best obtained. Mr. Pitt and the other Abolitionists contended that our Colonial Slavery was endangered by introducing Negroes from *Africa*, who, bred in the enjoyment of Freedom, disdain the yoke of Slavery, would be ever attempting to subvert the venerable

fabric, and wickedly endeavouring to obtain their freedom; he therefore proposed, that the importation of such dangerous Negroes should be prohibited, and that the Colonist, should be confined to the home manufacture of Slaves, and these being born and bred Slaves would more patiently submit to chains and whips, to incessant labour and extreme hunger.

Mr. *Dundas* admitted the propriety and policy of this regulation, and hoped the proprietors of Slaves might at length see it in the same light; when it might be adopted, but that it would be an invasion of the rights and privileges of the Slave-holder to compel him to rear instead of purchase Slaves. Mr. *Pitt* then proved, that only four of our islands needed supplies, that some were saturated with Slaves; consequently those latter might be converted into breeding pens for supplying those gentlemen in the other Islands, who might not choose to be at the trouble of rearing Slaves to supply the place of those whom they had murdered. To set this very troublesome question at rest, it was resolved, by one branch of our *well* ballanced Government, that some time or other it might be expedient to adopt this *notable* regulation. But the Slave-holders, alarmed at this innovation on their liberties, appeared at the bar of the House of Lords, denied their right and power to circumscribe the *Slave-market*, and on this remonstrance, it has been deemed convenient to hang up this despicable question, peace be to its manes.

Thus, it appears, that the question so long agitated amongst us on the Slave Trade, was a mere Commercial Regulation for encouraging the home manufacture of Slaves, for opening a New Trade to *Africa*, which the former was supposed to prevent, and for giving permanence and security to a system of Slavery in our Colonies. The Abolitionists and the Anti-abolitionists, indeed, both talked, and with equal propriety, about justice and humanity, but it was merely to lengthen, diversify and ornament their speeches. The most eligible mode of increasing the Slaves was the sole question, and so far was the Abo-

lition of Slavery from being intended, that Mr. *Pitt's* principal argument in favour of his plan was, that, it secured Slavery from impending dangers.

Hence it appears, that the Abolition of Slavery either gradual or immediate is a measure intirely *French*, to them belong all the Infamy, or all the Honour — Calumny itself cannot charge a single Member of the British Legislature with being so far contaminated with French Principles, as to propose restoring the Slaves in our Islands to the benefits of civil society, and the protection of its laws. An offer of confraternity, so opposite to our whole system of conduct, that the remotest idea of it strikes us with horror. Nor can any Whig Politician, from Mr. *Locke* to the present time, be justly charged with adopting such a detestable principle, That liberty and happiness are to be confined to his foggy Island, is an Englishman's favourite idea, to spread mischief and desolation through the earth, is his most luxurious enjoyment,

The proceedings of the French and English governments, on this, and on all other subjects, are so perfectly dissimilar, that they may be excusable in avowing mutual abhorrence. Mr. *Burke* justly observes, in his preface to *Brissot*, That, "*such is the nature of French principles, that they cannot be viewed with indifference; that it is a system which must be regarded with enthusiastic admiration, or with the highest degree of detestation, horror and resentment.*" On this question, at least, the two governments are fairly at issue; and he must, indeed, be an idiot who can admire both.

If the *British* government be just, then, indeed, do the French deserve the epithets of robbers, and plunderers. They have at one blow annihilated a property of at least *sixty millions sterling*. But on the contrary, if these Slaves were not a property, and the French Decree has rescued a million of fellow-creatures from the hands of violence, placed them under the protection of the law, and restored them to the benefit of civil society; then have they raised

an immortal monument to their Fame. If we on the contrary, not merely strengthen the hands of violence, within our own jurisdiction, but engage in a crusade to bind a million of men, women and children, with an adamant yoke of slavery, in the very moment when it was broken; then let it be asked, whether any curse can await us, if any calamity can befall us, which we do not deserve?

Mr. Pitt, in reprobating this emancipating Decree, appears not to be at all desirous of censuring it as an insulated act. He tells us this *weak, absurd, improvident* proceeding flowed naturally from their general system, and was perfectly congenial with it. He considers it as a sample of their whole system; the whole then must be judged of by this selected portion: and we cannot defend this Decree, without being understood to have defended the whole system of French principles; and if any acts of the French government should be indefensible, such acts, and not this Decree, must be deemed anomalous.

As the French have only Decreed the general principle, that the Slaves should be emancipated, and have referred it to the Committee of Safety "*to take prudent measures to carry it into effect,*" so it must be understood that it is the general principle, that the Slaves should be emancipated, which Mr. Pitt stigmatizes, as *weak, absurd and improvident*. These terms cannot be applied to the mode of effecting this important purpose, as the mode has not as yet been determined on. Danton justly observes, "*This day you have done justice to humanity, but let us be the moderators of this wise Decree. Let us reflect that this passage so sudden from Slavery to Freedom, may be unfortunate, while we ought only to be desirous of making it useful. Let us, therefore, refer it to the Committee of General Safety, to adopt prudent measures to carry the Decree into execution.*" This conduct is, it seems, *absurd, weak and improvident*. Let us contrast it with our conduct, which is, to be sure, as *laudable* as that of the French is *detestable*. The French have resolved, that a million of fellow-creatures shall be restored to

the benefit of society, and the protection of the laws. This is it seems, *weak* and *foolish*. We say they shall be considered as chattels, remain out of the protection of the law, subject to the will of their fellow subjects, to be treated as brutes; is this it seems quite *wise* and *laudable*. The French, having obtained liberty for themselves, are desirous of communicating its happiness to others; this is *absurd*. We make use of the power we derive from the liberty we enjoy to enslave others; this is perfectly *rational*. The French refer the subject to a Committee, to adopt *prudent* measures; this is *improvident*. We are for years agitating the subject of the West India Slavery, bringing the enormities of it before the public, without having the least intention of interfering in it; and even suffer the Planters to insult the Legislature, by declaring that it had no right to interfere between them and their Slaves, and that, if even it presumes to endeavour to prevent additional importations, they will set our laws at defiance, and the Colonial Judicatures shall trample them under foot. All this is perfectly *prudent*.

Presumptuous as it may be deemed to attempt a defence of this weak, absurd, improvident Decree, yet, alas! I am implicated in the crime, and consequently necessitated to undertake its defence.—Long since did I presume to disseminate the detestable positions, That it was incumbent on us to endeavour
 “ As speedy and effectual subversion of Slavery in
 “ our Islands, as the circumstances and situation of
 “ the Slaves would admit;” That “ We should not
 “ limit our views to the abolition of the African
 “ Slave Trade, as the Slavery formed on it was
 “ equally unjust;” and “ That the persons called
 “ Slaves in our Islands were intitled to liberty, by
 “ the common law of the land; that the mode of
 “ putting them in possession of their legal and natural right out to be speedy and effectual, and ought
 “ to be considered with no other view but their happiness, however it might militate against the interest of their oppressors.”

Had the French been left in the undisturbed possession of that Freedom they had so gloriously obtained; had they been suffered quietly to pursue their wise and benevolent principles, little would this, or any of their other measures, have needed a defence from me. Their best and effectual defence, would have been the beneficial effects they would have produced. This was well known, and dreaded by those whose interest it was that those effects never should take place. To impede and obstruct their operation was the obvious policy to be adopted. France must be attacked, and filled with blood; and then the exclamation was to be bellowed forth, see the effects of French principles! so we may fill now the French West India Islands with carnage, and then possibly, we may have the audacity to exclaim, behold the effects of emancipation!

In defending this Decree, of the National Convention, I mean not to be guided by any supposed effects, either beneficial, or adverse, which may possibly result; for, notwithstanding the unmeaning clamour which Mr. *Burke* has raised against abstract principles, I mean to contend, That "No circumstances, or situation, in society, can justify the subjecting a human being, as a property, to his fellow creature; or the continuance of such a state, where it already exists;" and, in discussing this question, I mean not to be entangled with any particular principles, of government, because, so far as the question of government is concerned, Slavery is equally inimical to all government. In whatever hands, or under whatever form, governments exists, it behoves to be Supreme over every individual; to that Supreme Authority he is to yield obedience, and to that he is to look for protection. Whenever one member of the community claims another as a property, this Supreme Authority, which is essential to government, is, in such case, so far subverted; both the Slave, and the Slave holder, as far as the relation exists between them cease to be amenable to the Supreme Authority. Hence, in proportion as we deem government to be

beneficial to society, we must consider Slavery to be injurious ; and if a state of government be natural to man, a state of personal Slavery must be unnatural and subversive of social order.

Personal Slavery is as incompatible with a state of nature, as with a state of government. No circumstances can possibly exist, in such a state, from whence it can originate. *Locke* and many other writers, have, indeed, endeavoured to support it : but it was on principles so absurd as to be now universally abandoned ; and *Blackstone* has justly reprobated them.

But however indefensible the old principles of Slavery may be considered, yet, is it now attempted to be supported on grounds far more absurd. Mr. *Pitt* says, " In that unhappy situation in which our baneful conduct had brought both ourselves and them, it would not be justice on either side to give them liberty." Mr. *Pitt*, with a view to persuade us to abandon a particular species of the Slave Trade, has stigmatized the original seizure of the African as an atrocious robbery : but the Slave-holder, in the Islands can perpetuate the robbery, retain the stolen goods without any crime ; nay, he says, it would be injustice in him to relinquish them ; an enormous crime is, it seems cured by its continuance.

The unhappy African is seized in his native land, dragged hundreds of miles to the coast, carried to our islands, where he is condemned, under chains, and whips, to wear out the miserable remainder of his life. Mr. *Pitt* garbles this mass of enormity ; some of the gang concerned in this transaction are, it seems, robbers, but others are honourable men. The wretched victim is transmitted from hand to hand : will Mr. *Pitt* inform us where, and at which transit, the criminality vanishes ? is only the original seizure criminal ? are all the purchasers in the different markets of Africa innocent ? Is it a defence of the Planter that the injury is already perpetrated, and cannot be fully repaired, as the Slave cannot be returned to his family, from whence he was torn ! the same defence

will apply to the Slave-dealer in Africa, who frequently is ignorant whence the Slave came, and equally unable to restore him.

It seems, then, that we have committed an injury, which we cannot fully repair, we have torn a fellow-creature from a country to which he never can return, murdered his wife who never can again solace his cares; deprived him of his children whom he never can again embrace; and, then, we make these irreparable injuries a plea for perpetrating and extending to his offspring, injuries which we can remedy. We deprive them of those enjoyments which tend to make liberty and life desirable, and thence we infer that we have a right to deprive them of liberty and life also. Mr. *Pitt* talks of the *unhappy* situation into which we have brought *them* and *ourselves*. The unhappy situation into which we have brought *them*, is, to be sure, pretty evident: but in the name of common sense, what can he mean by the unhappy situation into which *we* are brought? Is the Slave-holder *unhappy*, while his chariot rolls on sugar hogheads and rum puncheons? or are the numerous classes, who derive wealth and splendor from the Colonial Slavery, unhappy. The people at large do not seem to be unhappy; while enjoying the produce of robbery and murder; nor does Mr. *Pitt* appear to be very miserable, while, by swelling the revenue, trade, and navigation, of the nation, it enables him to carry on the war for extirminating French principles. Indeed, so extremely well satisfied are we with the unhappy situation, into which our *baneful conduct* has brought both *them* and *ourselves*, that *we* are anxious to add to the half million, whom we have already brought into that unhappy situation, the million in the French Islands, whom the National Convention have resolved to extricate from it.

But it is pretended that we have so debased so brutalized them, by Slavery, that they are incapable of enjoying a state of freedom; and we continue to hold them in Slavery, from pure benevolence; and, from similar principles of benevolence, the Slave-dealer brings them from Africa, where he tells us,

they are in a brutal state. It is a remarkable feature in the conduct of this inquiry, that both the Abolitionists, and Anti-abolitionists, have scarcely adduced any evidence but what, like Hudibras' arguments

————— directly tend,
Against the cause they would defend.

Thus the Slave-dealers themselves prove every circumstance, with which their adversaries had charged, them: and they, in their turn, while contending for abolishing the African Slave Trade, and setting up a new manufacture of Slaves in our own Islands, proved decidedly the absurdity and futility of their plan, and that an Abolition of the Slavery in the islands is both practicable and absolutely indispensable. Fully satisfied of this, from the slender extracts which, from the voluminous evidence, has been laid before the public, by the society for abolishing the Slave Trade, I long since, wished to examine the evidence at large, with a view to elucidate this important point; but in vain have I endeavoured to obtain it. Too precious for the public eye, it is sedulously preserved among the parties who conduct this business.

Understanding that Mr. *Richard Phillips*, one of the Committee for abolishing the Slave Trade, had two copies, I presumed to solicit the loan of one of them for the purpose, but I was informed that he would furnish no materials to an *Adversary*.

Under these circumstances, I must be content with appealing to their own abstract, and even from thence appears the fitness of the Slaves for a state of freedom. In their own country, it appears, from the evidence of *Wadstrom*, *Storey*, *Towne*, *Dalrymple*, *Hall*, *Howe*, *Falconbridge*, and *Trotter*. That they are punctual, honest, hospitable, susceptible of all the social virtues, friendly, grateful, affectionate, skilful in manufactures, their capacities equal to the Europeans.—Mr. *Wadstrom* contends they surpass Europeans in affection; and Mr. *Newton* says, he found there the best people he ever met with.—That when they are brought among Europeans they are corrupted by their example, will not be disputed; and the alleg-

ing this corruption, as a plea for perpetuating their Slavery is a tolerable degree of effrontery. Yet even after we have brutalized them, as is pretended, they seem to possess a character to which the lower classes of the English can scarcely have a claim. *Giles* says, "Their capacity is good, and their disposition better than might be expected from persons so untutored." The Rev. Mr. *Rees* says, "They are as reasonable as any other beings, considering their education." Doctor *Harrison*, of Jamaica, thinks the abilities of the Negroes equal to our own, and their disposition much the same; that the Free Negroes are as industrious as the Whites, and that it is the Slavery which causes the unwillingness of the others. Doctor *Jackson*, of Jamaica, says, that after much knowledge of them, he could not perceive them at all inferior in capacity to unlettered White Men; that they possess many amiable qualities, charitable to all in distress, parents strongly attached to their children, and have given strong proofs of gratitude and attachment; often complain that they are an oppressed people, that they suffer in this world, but shall be happy in the next, and denounce the judgment of God on the White Men, their oppressors. *Coor*, of Jamaica, says, he always observed Negroes, who had grounds in good order, work with great pleasure. *Terry* says, that Free Negroes are as well behaved as others in the same rank of society. Capt. *Smith* always considered the Negroes as a keen, sensible, well disposed people; when their habits were not vitiated by cruel usage; has seen good usage produce a good effect. *Duncan*, of Antigua, says, that the capacities and dispositions of Negroes are much the same as the Whites; that those instructed by the Methodists were improved in their morals and behaviour. Captain *Lloyd* believed that Negroes might be induced to work without severity; and that a Mr. *Greenland* never punished his Slaves. Captain *Davison* says, Free Negroes are very industrious. Rev. Mr. *Stuart* says, the Blacks are not inferior to the Whites in abilities, and disposition; have as much generosity,

fidelity, gratitude, understanding and ingenuity.—
 Rev. Mr. *Davies* says, that their feelings are much the same as Europeans. *Cook* says, the capacity of some Negroes are very great. *Clappeson* that the Free Negroes, in general behaved well. The *Dean of Middleham* says, their disposition is in general affectionate, where well treated. *Woolrich* says, the young Negroes learn trades as readily as the Whites; knows of no exceptions to their possessing the social affections as strongly as Whites, particularly the Creoles, their natural affections are as great as elsewhere.

Is it meant to insult the common sense of mankind, that such evidence as this is brought forward, by the very persons who insist that such a people as this are to be deemed as brutes, unworthy of the protection of the law, or of partaking of the benefits of civil society? Will Mr. *Pitt* favour us with a scale of intellectual powers, and intellectual cultivation, and by that scale let the West India Negroes, and our English *Church and King Mob* be judged; let those who rise to the given standard be deemed Free, and let those who are beneath it be adjudged Slaves?

After all the absurdity which has been circulated on this subject; will any one condescend to shew that any degree of intellectual cultivation is essential to place a man under the protection of the law, and constitute him a member of civil society? so far from it that, in proportion as he is deficient in both, it becomes more peculiarly necessary that he should receive the protection and be subject to the controul of civil society. Less capable of governing and protecting themselves, the laws of society should peculiarly be extended to protect them from injury; to suffer such to become subject to the arbitrary will of an individual is peculiarly criminal.

Is it the ordinary conduct of society to put out of the protection of the law, and subject to the arbitrary will of another, the ignorant and helpless? Is the infant, or the idiot abandoned to the arbitrary will of an individual? Let it be explained, how a state of personal Slavery can result from any particular por-

tion of intellects, or degree of cultivation. Were a man to rescue an abandoned infant from destruction, nourish and rear it, would it become his property? If, then, a life saved, and benefits conferred, cannot constitute a property in man, shall it be deduced from injury? Shall we emasculate, or blind a fellow creature, and thence claim dominion over him, because we have degraded and sunk him in the scale of human being? Will not the maxim of law be applied, that "*No man shall profit of his own wrong*?" instead of the vengeance of society being averted, it shall be poured out on the culprit, and the injured shall claim reparation for the wrong, as far as it is reparable.

Indeed, no circumstances, whatever, can possibly authorise the making man a property of his fellow-man. From the special relation of the Father to the Child, and Husband to the Wife, peculiar authority results: but the law of society still preserves the supreme control, and limits the special authority within its necessary bounds, and in no well ordered society is it pretended, that even, the parental authority constitutes the child a property.

If, then, a property in man can result from no analogy in civil society, shall it be derived from the most wanton, and absurd pretenses? If it arises not from those high and special authorities, which are essential to society, shall it be suffered to exist where no relation subsists, but what is formed by violence and injustice? If the greatest of benefits cannot be a just foundation, shall it be derived from the grossest of injuries?

As this question has been agitated in a manner peculiarly adapted to perplex, and mislead; it is not surprising, that many confound an emancipation from Slavery with a dissolution of government; hence, they exclaim, what would the Negroes do, if left to themselves? True; but do the French mean to abandon them, to leave them to themselves? Does any one who proposes emancipation, mean emancipation from government? on the contrary, by destroying

the arbitrary dominion of the Slave holder, the Slaves would be brought immediately under the subjection as well as the protection of the law.

From their debased, their ignorant, their depraved state, results the strongest reason for their emancipation from the dominion of the Slave-holder, because such a dominion is the farthest removed from a state of regular, well administered government, and such a government becomes necessary in proportion as the governed are ignorant and debased. When the mind of man is improved by cultivation, principles of action arise, which in some degree, supply the place of government; a sense of honour, of shame, a regard for the good opinion of others, knowledge of the various relations of civil society, all come powerfully in aid of moral principle; and even that principle itself is so far improved in the cultivated mind, as greatly to aid, and in some degree perhaps to supersede the necessity, and obviate the imperfections of government; but, where the governed are base and ignorant, the moral principle is so far destroyed, and no spring of action remains but human laws; which, it then becomes more peculiarly necessary, should be uniform in their operations, constant in their application, strong in their administration, wise and just in their formation. The great defect in the system of Slavery is, that it is totally deficient in all these respects; the will of each Planter, or Overseer becomes varied and unstable law, arising not merely from the weakness and wickedness of the human mind, but from accident, caprice, removals, and anarchy: the control of the Planter, or Overseer is rarely exerted over the Slave, except as to those special circumstances and times in which his own interest is concerned; as to every other action of their lives, and their intercourse between each other, in which the master has no interest; he gives himself no concern. The Planters in their evidence, absurdly boast how much they leave the Slaves to their own management; nay, they tell us, that crimes which we deem capital, are suffered to pass with trivial or with no punishment. But

they ought to know that a weak, relaxed administration of Justice is the most detestable, and peculiarly so, when the governed are such as they describe their Slaves to be.

Mr. Pitt says, that a *Black* government is an idea sufficient to excite our horror. Why a *Black* government should not be as good as a *White* one, he does not condescend to inform us. If he means that persons in the state in which the Slaves are in our islands, are but ill qualified to form a government; he says, truly, and he may say the same, of the lowest classes amongst ourselves; but that no more proves, that the Negroes ought to be left in a state of Slavery, because they are not philosophers and politicians enough to form a government, than it does that our peasants ought to be made Slaves of, because they are not adequate to the task.—After having by our *baneful* conduct brought them to the unhappy situation in which they now are, it no more becomes us to abandon them without government, to anarchy and confusion among themselves, than it does to leave them without the protection of law to the wanton and lawless will of their oppressors. The French Decree does what it became us to do; deliver them from their oppressors, restore them to the protection of the law, and subject them to its control.

That there exists powerful motives for our not adopting a similar mode of conduct, cannot be doubted by those who know the nature of our excellent constitution, and the powerful and extensive Colonial influence in the British Legislature.

Though Mr. Pitt, and even Mr. Dundas has admitted that the state of Slavery is injurious to the community, by diminishing the product of labour, yet is it not to be expected, that they should have the courage to pursue the public good, any more than the path of justice, in opposition to such a terrific power; but still, surely, it was not too much to expect that they should suffer that nation to adopt a different line of conduct, where no powerful, partial interest is suffered to obstruct the public good.—FINIS.

6

A DISCOURSE,
Occasioned by the National Fast,
FEBRUARY 28, 1794.

By *W. FOX.*

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CONSIDERING the state of mankind as it really exists, and not according to any utopian ideas of perfection; and, supposing the conduct of those who govern nations, to bear some resemblance to that which the page of history presents to our view, we are certainly not warranted in very high expectations, nor indeed, is it to be imagined from the nature and source of human actions, that any peculiar eminence in virtue will be their distinguishing characteristic.

That, those who govern their fellow-men are amenable only to heaven, being their favourite axiom, an axiom which is the basis of the British Constitution, It does not appear very rational, that their conduct should be exemplary in proportion as the means of committing crimes are in their power, as the temptation, to commit them become powerful, and in proportion as the fear of punishment is removed to a period which mankind are apt to consider as uncertain and remote, and in which we do not seem to repose any great confidence, as to restraining the other classes of society from violating its rights, and if found sufficient to awe and -restrain those who govern mankind, it can only be, because the sanctions of a future state more powerfully operate on *their* minds, and are more uniformly and constantly in *them* an influencing principle of human action; or else, because they possess some innate principle of virtue, which needs no sanction, and fears no temptation.

But, as this is not always the case, and as the dignity of government requires, that those who administer

it, should be contemplated as enthroned in *wisdom* and *virtue* as well as in *power*, and as nothing can be more libellous than to suppose that those who govern us, are *weak* and *wicked* like ourselves. It has become expedient, not merely that the moral principle of human action should be relaxed in their favour, but that its very nature should be so absolutely changed, that the very line of conduct which is deemed essentially requisite for obtaining the slenderest decency of character amongst other men, may not merely be trampled on by them with impunity; but the very idea that they conduct themselves on such vulgar principles, is deemed a reproach to the sublimity of their character. And we see a system of Ethics framed for their use, called *Political Morality*, and this prefix has such a wonderful effect, that evil is instantly changed into good, and good into evil: nay, that conduct, which if pursued by any other member of society shall bring on him infamy and punishment, may be adopted by this elevated order of men with *eclat*, add splendor to their characters and be resounded through the world as the foundation of their fame.

It may possibly be lamented that this new Ethics has not been reduced into a system; but this, from its very nature, is impracticable, its leading feature being the lawfulness of violating all principle; and were propriety of language regarded, *contra* morality might be its appellation. To deprive our fellow creature of that life which was the gift of his Creator, seems on common principles an offence of a most tremendous nature: when an instance of it occurs in civil life, it awakens our attention, excites our horror, and draws down on the culprit the vengeance of society; but let those who govern nations, order their bands of ruffians upon the bloody work, it is then, it seems, no longer *murder*, it assumes the appellation of *war*, and becomes honourable in proportion to the extent of the misery it occasions; we then receive with exultation, the news of tens of thousands killed and mangled in one dreadful heap; and whatever sentiment may be excited by the violent death

of an individual, yet, by extending the idea to thousands and to millions, all our horror instantly vanishes, our minds become reconciled to their dying agonies; and to the still more dreadful circumstance of the tortures of the wounded, condemned to drag a mangled and mutilated body through the miserable remnant of life, while the wretched inhabitants of the seat of war are involved in calamities, so dreadful, that the human mind is scarcely capable of conceiving their extent and diversity.

To bring such enormous misery on our fellow-creatures, one would imagine no circumstances could justify, no cause could be adequate, yet it is perpetually done, on pretexts so frivolous, and often so false, as to excite our mirth were it not suppressed by our horror and indignation.

That a community, as well as an individual, ought to defend themselves when *actually* attacked, will not be disputed; but to go abroad in quest of blood and slaughter, under pretence of guarding against *future* and *supposed* dangers, is certainly incompatible with every moral principle even as recognized by the common practice of civil life. Do we stab every man from whom we imagine it possible that we may receive an injury? Or, do we burn his house and murder his family in order to secure ourselves by disabling him from effecting his wicked purposes? But, in fact, few wars have even such flimsy pretences; they are usually undertaken by powerful nations, who have nothing to fear, against weak and defenceless ones; or else, between powerful rival nations, contending which shall extend most widely its oppressive tyranny over harmless people; nay, to found a commerce on violence; and to compel other countries to sell their commodities, or buy ours, on terms dictated by the sword; and which seems as justifiable as murdering a man that we may obtain his customers, or destroying his estate, that we may benefit our own.

But even interest is often out of the question, and we see all the horrors of war take place contrary to interest, in defence of some imaginary point of honour;

nobody ever pretended that either Falkland Island, or Nootka Sound, was an object adequate to the expence of a war. National honour was the pretext; yet, what a drawcanfir should we deem the man who desolated a parish, and murdered the inhabitants, because the Squire or the Parson had affronted him! In the House of Commons is avowed, a thorough abhorrence of all the parties who have prevailed during the revolution; yet, have we obtained possession of Toulon, by holding out to them an approbation of the constitution recently subverted; and Mr. Pitt avows, that Political Morality authorises us to avail ourselves of the parties and divisions of France, to distress them, and benefit ourselves: yet some may ask, what would be thought of a lawyer, who held out hopes of supporting a claimant to an estate in order to obtain possession for himself? Or, a man who, under the guise of Friendship, entered a house, and availed himself of the discord of the inhabitants to burn and plunder it? Hence, it seems, that Political Morality establishes as a principle, and source of conduct, pride, ambition, avarice, and all those passions, which ordinary morality calls on us to curb, and to suppress. It is not that thorny path, which moralists have depicted.—The summit is to be attained by giving a loose to the passions; and there its votaries may sit enthroned, indulging every crime, and spreading horror and desolation around them, while they are emblazoned with resplendent glory, and receiving adulation and applause.

Thus seducing is this political morality; nor is it surprising, that the contest should be violent for situations, where the gratifying of the predominant passions of the human mind receive the most splendid rewards, which the severest virtue can alone merit, and when principles and motives of conduct, which would debase to infamy in private life, shall, when adopted by public men, on the great theatre of the world, be dignified with the splendid epithets of patriotism and love of our country. That to love our country may be a duty, we will not dispute: so is the love of our

families. It is the most powerful, the most laudable, the most natural, and the most essentially necessary. It is a bond of union which existed prior to governments, and has been supposed, by some, to have been their origin. If any superior energy of action can be called for, it must be in favour of a beloved woman, who has attached herself to an individual, with a reliance on his protection and support, abandoning the world in confidence that, in uniting herself with his fate, she shall receive an ample reward. If it were to be supposed possible, that there could exist in nature such a monster as this political morality, if we could for a moment imagine that circumstances and relations in life might warrant a deviation from the strict and general rules of moral principle, it must surely be in behalf of the helpless infants whom we have brought into existence, and the continuance of whose existence depends every moment on our exertions: yet, is it universally admitted, that those exertions must be circumscribed by the general rights of man, that however these relative connections may call on us to put forth every energy, and to sacrifice our ease, our passions, and our desires, in the performance of such important duties, yet never was it pretended, that they authorised us to violate the property, or infringe, in the smallest degree, the sacred and inviolable rights of our fellow creatures.—The eye of pity may, indeed, contemplate the melancholy situation of the wretch who, impelled by such powerful temptation, seizes the property of his neighbour to preserve the wife he loves, or the infant which it is his duty to support; yet no one supposes that even such a strong case as that is a defence. Within the bounds of moral duty are our exertions for their relief to be limited, and the result is to be left in the hands of the Supreme. But, do those who govern mankind, and who stile themselves Fathers of their people, pretend to adopt such a line of conduct? Is it by sacrifices made by *themselves* that they benefit their people? Or, do they seek to aggrandize, and enrich them, by bringing misery and desolation on others? While they themselves expect to be re-

warded for the deed by the applause and adulation of mankind; and, instead of making any sacrifice themselves, they claim such splendor and power as deluges the world in blood, to attain the envied eminence.

As the duty of submission to civil government is strongly inculcated by the gospel of Christ, it may be deemed an unfortunate circumstance when the conduct of those who administer it tempts us to deviate from that respect to it, which the principles of moral duty, drawn from the nature of civil society, call for, and which Christianity, with great propriety, still more forcibly presses on its votaries. That this duty may have its limits, when attended with circumstances which connect it with other duties, will hardly be denied, because, however strongly and broadly the New Testament lays down the duty of submission of wives to their husbands, children to their parents, and servants to their masters, yet we cannot but acknowledge that other duties frequently circumscribe them. None will contend that these are duties unlimited in their operation; and it does not appear that submission to civil government is laid down in more unqualified terms, or can claim a more unqualified observance.

But however qualified may be this duty, yet the gospel, in its general tenor, certainly inculcates very strongly submission to injury, returning good for evil, &c. and it is probably this circumstance which has rendered christianity a favourite with those who govern, or those who oppress mankind. We are necessitated to resort to this supposition, because there does not appear, that they can have any other motive for adopting a religion so hostile to worldly power and grandeur, and so inimical to that conduct which is necessary to attain them. Thus it is possible, that a Monarch on his throne, or a Slave-owner with his whip, may condescend to hold the gospel in his hands, and tell his subjects, or his slaves, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," and "He that resists shall receive to himself damnation!" and if the subjects of the one become more passive under oppression, and the slaves of the other be increased in value

twenty per cent. it will not be deemed extraordinary if they become strenuous advocates for an alliance between Church and State: If bloody wars be adopted to prevent the State's being deprived of so important an ally, a clergy marshaled for its defence, and penal laws enacted to enforce and extend it. But, as every good is said to have its alloy of evil, so, even this great and important support, which worldly domination receives from christianity, may be accompanied with a danger not undeserving notice. Had the wise and venerable practice of former ages been still adhered to,—Had the records of christianity been still locked up in an almost unknown tongue, to be dealt out to the community in such scraps as the caution of the clergy might suggest, accompanied with such glosses, and restricted to such an import, as their policy would suggest; then, indeed, might christianity, so restricted, have still contributed its support to human dominion, without endangering those who resorted to its alliance. But, alas! this is no longer the case, they have, unfortunately, been suffered to lie open to the Swinish Multitude in their vernacular tongues, while the art of printing has too diffusely circulated among them a knowledge of the contents.

Thus they find that Christians are exhorted to put away all wrath and strife, to be kind, patient and long suffering to all men, return good for evil, to avenge not themselves, but leave vengeance to him to whom vengeance belongs; to love their enemies, and do them good, if their enemies hunger to feed them, and if they thirst, to give them drink, &c.—And as these precepts seem to be of unlimited obligation, as it does not appear that Wetstein, Bengelius, or Griesbach, have been able to discover a single reading which will warrant a supposition that christians, should they become Kings or Ministers, are discharged from the obligation of obeying the precepts of their religion, when we see them (as sometimes happens) trampling on these duties, we are apt, in proportion as we really believe and reverence our religion, to

look with horror on their conduct; and, however, much we may endeavour to reverence the King and all in authority, yet, at the most, will it only be with that degree and species of reverence with which the child beholds his criminal parent when violating the laws of society, and all the civil relations of life. It will not restrain him from remonstrating on his criminal conduct, nor, in some cases, even from endeavouring to obstruct him in the perpetration of his crimes, and in guarding society from their baneful effects.

We will, therefore, allow the advocates of monarchical authority to assume their strongest ground, admit them to the possession of that important post which they long triumphantly maintained, and which, when, at length, necessitated to abandon, they have never since dared boldly to assume any other. Let us admit *Sir Robert Filmer* to invest his heroes with *patriarchal* authority. Suppose them to possess all the rights, and all the power of the *Partres Familiae*, and, then let us ask, what are these rights, and what is that authority? But we will not derive an answer to this question from the corrupt practice of barbarous ages, whether recorded in Profane or in Sacred History, nor will we derive it from that special authority which God, himself, for wise, though to us unknown purposes, gave to particular nations, or families. Let us rather enquire what are the duties, and what the rights of the heads of families, on that true foundation of moral principle, the implied will of our common parent, deducing that implied will from a consideration of the relation we stand in to him and to each other.

Then let us change the term *nation* to *family*; let us suppose one family to reside in this Island, another in *Africa*, another in the *West Indies*, one in the *East Indies*, another in *France*, and another in *Ireland*.—Will it be said, that the parent, the Head of this family, residing in this Island, has any right as such, to send one of his sons to extirpate the family in a *West India* Island?—To furnish the Head of the African

family with fire-arms, and chains, to subdue and bind his family; and so subdued, convey them in chains to the West India Island, that this African family and their offspring should be kept in chains for ever, forcibly to supply the English family with the rich products which their own cold climate had refused them?—Will it be said, that he has a right to send another of his sons to the East Indies, under pretence of trading with the Asiatic family for the produce of their industry, and quarelling with another foreigner who had come there under the same pretext, make that quarrel a foundation not only for possessing their houses and their lands, but spreading famine and death among them, by seizing their very food; and shall the English parent grant a charter to his son, authorising him *thus* to govern the Asiatic family, on condition of his sending part of the money to England, which has been so obtained in Asia, to enable him to pay his debts: and lastly, suppose he were to send another of his sons to the Irish family, harrassing them from age to age, without the shadow of a pretext, but that they had the misfortune to be neighbours, and therefore exposed to their inroads; and less powerful, consequently unable to retaliate the injury; should he compel them to contribute a tenth of the produce of their labour to support an English clergy, whose religion they abhorred, and the greater part of the rents of their land to aggrandise and enrich their neighbour? Let us ask, whether there be any principle which could justify this conduct? would any one presume to apologise for it? would not the voice of reason and justice, call on mankind to abhor it? If so, let it then be asked, whether that conduct can be justifiable in a number of individuals, or families, which would be deemed the extreme of profligate wickedness in one? Bodies of men may countenance each other in crimes which the most shameless individuals would blush to perpetrate. Removed from the fear of punishment, by the power they possess, they may set all moral duty at defiance, and invent a jargon of their own, tell us of *political* morality, and

political necessity, and, under this flimsy veil, they may carry human crimes to their *apex*. They may punish with harsh severity subordinate ones, which, in comparison with their own, are but as dust in the balance. Nay, perhaps, the severest chastisements may be reserved for those who dare to arraign their crimes, and against whom they may have nothing to alledge, but that they are more virtuous than themselves. Have such a sense of the dignity of virtue, as to express their abhorrence of their deeds, and disdain to profess veneration and respect for the perpetrators?

Mr. *Pitt* has arraigned with great and just severity, *one* part of our diversified enormities. Perhaps it is not very easy to discover any principle, on which it can be selected from the dreadful mass, unless it be on the mere ground of impolicy, on the ground that murdering and stealing the inhabitants of Africa prevent a more profitable trade to that country. But as he urges the injustice of the practice, may it not be asked, whether forcibly continuing the Africans, and their posterity, in a state of slavery, be not equally incompatible with morality, as the original seizure; and is not the destroying of twenty millions of Asiatics, and bringing their property to England to discharge our national debt, equally a violation of our duty? Or is it much inferior, in the order of crimes, to harass and impoverish, for our aggrandisement, a country superior in natural advantages to our own, compel them to dance after us in all our whimsical changes of religion and government, provoke them to insurrections, by compelling them to support the clergy of a foreign country, and the nobility of a foreign court. There may be shades of difference in these enormities, but they are all equally defensible, or equally unjustifiable. Will the advocates of government come forward, and give us an intelligible defence? will they give us any other than that these acts are the basis of our riches and our splendor, as the Highwayman will tell us that it is indispensibly necessary for him to pursue his vocation, because with-

out it he has not the means of obtaining his bottle and his girl.

But if these deeds be enormous, If the vilest sycophant of power cannot mutter a defence, If they perpetrate them merely because they dare, If we are to understand that they are perpetrated because there exists no earthly power to whom the actors are amenable, and because the just vengeance of Heaven is despised; will not some be apt to ask, whether it be not rather extraordinary that those should expect our obedience to their laws, who are trampling on the eternal laws of justice; that they should look for our subjection to their authority, while they themselves are spurning that of the most high?

A mind untutored in this species of knowledge, might be apt to imagine that, so far from the conduct of those who govern nations being unrestrained by those moral principles which are obligatory on individuals, on them they ought to be deemed peculiarly binding; because to no other control are they subject but conscience and honour; no power, no laws to which they are amenable. Those circumstances in social life are deemed the criterion of the human character; and a criminal conduct under them constitutes its lowest degradation. Debts of Honour, where no laws interpose to enforce them, are supposed to be peculiarly binding. To injure those who are helpless, who have no protector, and can hope no redress, constitute the utmost infamy of human character. To strike the vanquished to trample on him who lies prostrate at our feet, becomes only the lowest and the basest miscreant whom the meanest peasant would despise. And is it possible that those who govern nations can pursue the same line of conduct, and yet look for honour and respect? Do they expect that the glare resulting from wealth and power can dazzle the eyes of the ignorant and vulgar? and do they disregard those who are capable of judging of their conduct, because they are but few? If so, they must be destitute of those feelings essential to true dignity of mind, which will ever lead a man to esteem the

approbation of his fellow citizen, in proportion as they are acquainted with his conduct, and capable of appreciating its intrinsic worth.

Admitting that nations have a right to violate all the ordinary principles of human action, then should this extraordinary right, this *unique* code, be explained. Or if it consists in the trite and terrible apophthegm that nations are subject to no law, acknowledge no principle of action. and are let loose on mankind free from all restraint; then let this be avowed, and if possible defended, and apologized for: so far from this, they are perpetually talking of justice, reason, moderation, nay, religion: are they then afraid lest we should possess too great a respect and veneration for those who govern us, that they thus bring before us the records of their own condemnation?

Does the assassin, while perpetrating his deeds, proclaim aloud the command of heaven, "Thou shalt not murder?" If not, why, when the bloodhounds of war are about to be let loose, on pretexts which cannot furnish the slenderest veil to the true motives, on pretexts which possess not ingenuity sufficient to excite a smile, why must we bring in array to our own condemnation the principles of eternal and immutable justice? Why, if we resolve to desolate a country of the Antipodes and strip a prince of his dominions and revenues for our emolument, under pretence that he has quarrelled with somebody about a fortress? Or, if we think it our interest to avail ourselves of the discord among the first nation in the universe, that we may suppress their rising greatness, founded on the superior natural advantages they possess; and to effect this, hecatombs of human victims are to be sacrificed, because we say a ship has sailed up a river; why must we in such cases talk of the *justice* of the war? Is it not to provoke inquiry, and to call to the minds of the people principles which policy and decency ought to suppress? The conduct is certainly not without precedent. Prostitutes will sometimes vociferate against unchastity; but it rarely disguises, and still

more rarely elevates their character. But, what is still more extraordinary, in those cases, even heaven is brought in array before us. If those who govern possess any vantage ground, if they have peculiar privileges, to this world and to this life must they be limited. Here the doctrine of *political* morality originated. This is the sole theatre of its existence, and with this world must it terminate. Why then, it may be asked, do princes term their bloody contests appeals to heaven? Why are they so extremely willing to adopt them? Why do they manifest as much readiness to submit their cause to that judicature, as they do aversion to submit to any other ordeal? It certainly is a judicature that can hardly be deemed peculiarly favourable to their cause; but, to be sure, they have the advantage of obtaining a distant day of trial, which, it may be supposed, is an advantage that is prized in proportion to the badness of a cause. So willing they are to be accountable to heaven for their conduct on earth, that while some infer the purity of their motives, others may imagine that they await its decrees with tranquillity, because they disbelieve its existence; that they suppose it to be a cunningly devised fable; that they imagine the court to which they appeal will never be opened, and will never arraign its culprits.

That religion, which seems to be so adverse to worldly views, should be so intimately and universally combined with the most criminal, is not so extraordinary a circumstance as might be imagined. As the gods men have worshipped have been usually the works of their hands, or of their imaginations, little could they have to fear from such deities; and, amongst the number originating from the rich source of human fancy, we might have gratified our most fastidious taste. Whatever may be our projects, or our motives, there could be no great impropriety in supplicating *Mars* to patronize our cause. Under the auspices of *Mercury* might we have conducted our enterprize against Toulon; and our Ministers, by means of an intrigue with *Juno*, might possibly

have obtained possession of the thunderbolts of *Jupiter*, to hurl upon the French at Dunkirk. Or, if the exploits were too sanguinary, might not some *Belial* be invoked to whom hecatombs of human sacrifices might yield a sweet savor, or a *Moloch* to whom torrents of human blood might prove an acceptable oblation? But, let us ask, what motive could exist for turning from this rich variety, which the wisdom of former ages has spread before us? Why, when we let loose the Demon of war, must we assume that religion which points out the divine being as the *The God of Peace*? The author and finisher of that faith takes on him no higher character than the *Prince of Peace*, whose mission on earth was to proclaim *Peace* and good will to man, and who, though possessed of all power, yet yielded his back to be smitten, and hid not his face from shame and insult; and so far from admitting any of his disciples to adopt a contrary conduct, held himself forth as their example, declared they must be as their master, and his servants as their Lord; and when they inclined to adopt a different conduct poured on them the sternest reproof, even when it appeared to arise from a love of his person, and a zeal for his cause; when those, whom he most eminently loved, proposed to him to avenge himself on some who rejected his doctrine, and insulted his person, "*He rebuked them, saying ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of:*" Nay, when he who has been deemed the chief of his apostles expressed a repugnance to his submitting to suffer injury, from those whom his power could destroy, the bitterest reproach he ever uttered came from his lips, "*Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. If any man will come after me let him take up his cross, and follow me.*" Nor was this state of suffering and submission spoken of by him as a temporary suspension of a worldly power, which was afterwards to break out with splendor: He states it as resulting from the nature of his kingdom, which he characterises as not being of this

world, and with great propriety, observes, "*If my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.*" And he places that worldly domination which is so universally sought, and so highly applauded, as a perfect contrast to the future conduct of his disciples, "*Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise authority over them: But it shall not be so among you: But whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*"

Some may perhaps ask, whether the Princes of the Gentiles paronize this religion, from mere perversity of mind, because it is peculiarly hostile to their conduct? Does it add to their dignity to recognize the validity of a revelation which so tremendously denounces the vengeance of Heaven against them? Is it to prove their heroism that they hold themselves out as braving its terrors? Or, is it to prove the sublimity of their character, that, while perpetually at war, they hold out as a divine truth, "*Whence come Wars and Fightings amongst you, come they not hence even of your lusts?*"

Be it so; admit that the profligate vulgar will be disposed to venerate those who have the courage to defy the most High. That they will, indeed, esteem them to be great who can boldly glory in trampling on his authority. Yet, surely, they must then be content to be abhorred by those whose mean and dastardly minds lead them to reverence the God of Heaven, and to tremble before his throne. In proportion as we believe his gospel, we shall certainly abhor those who assume his name to disgrace it, and to trample on his authority.

In contemplating our fellow-men in possession of supreme authority, and their actions unfettered by the restraint of human laws, we are certainly prepared to behold the depravity of the human mind operating in no very moderate degree, we need not be greatly surprised at acts of considerable atrocity taking place; nor ought we to be over ready to cast off our allegiance on such grounds, but when the christian character is assumed we have a right

to form different expectations, and adopt a different line of conduct. The apostle inculcating the duty of separation from the world, tells us it does not follow, that we are to break off the connections and civil relations of life, on account of our seeing a conduct incompatible with purity of manners, for then, says he, we might go out of the world. But, says he, If any one who is called a brother (a christian brother) be a notorious violator of the laws of Christ, with such an one ye shall not preserve that social intercourse which is incumbent on us, as to other sinners; nay, he carries the prohibition so far, as even to forbid our eating with them. If, then, those forms of social respect which it is our duty to practice in the common intercourse of civil society, are to be forborn in respect to those who connect with a profession of the christian name a disregard to its precepts; must not that reverence, which christians were taught to manifest towards sovereign power, even in the hands of a Nero be materially affected by the assumption of the christian name? Had the Roman emperor taken on him that profession, would not Paul, who withstood a brother apostle, because he was to be blamed, have then insisted on a becoming conduct, even from the emperor? nor does it seem to be extremely probable, that he, who so vehemently called on his fellow-christians *to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but reprove them; to come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing, and God would receive them*, would have recognised the monstrous spectacle of a union of worldly domination and pride with the christian name.

Whatever subjection we may deem to be due to civil governors, yet can we respect them, when we see them associate their crimes with christianity? and, unless we mean to manifest that, like them, we assume it as a form, we shall resist the thought of recognising the criminal union, recollecting, that whatever rule of conduct our governors may adopt, we must be guilty if we take part in any which are not conformable to that law by which *we* at the least must be judged at the last day. ——— FINIS.

7

THOUGHTS

ON THE

Impending Invasion of England.

By *W. FOX.*

London: Sold by M. GURNEY, No. 128, *Holborn-Hill*; Price *Threepence* or *Five* for a *Shilling*.

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on the FAST, by the same Author.

MODERN Europe, is supposed to have been the theatre of the most subtle speculations, as well from her statesmen possessing extensive and refined political knowledge, as from her peculiar structure, rendering her a fit subject for the most extensive and intricate diplomatic arrangements.

If this be the case, certainly, her History presents a mortifying spectacle to human pride, and ought to humble in the dust the most presumptuous part of the human species. It appears, that when the most splendid projects have been formed, nay, apparently effected, they have uniformly failed to produce the expected effects; and not uncommonly have produced disastrous ones. On the contrary, when nations have been clamorously aroused to guard against some impending mischief, which the keen sighted Politician has been able to trace amidst a labyrinth of contingent circumstances; at length the statesman is foiled, the terrific train of circumstances actually take place, and behold, no mischief ensues, and, even unforeseen advantages arise. We are perpetually called on to attack and disarm some power, whom we are told is tremendously formidable, when our attention is as suddenly excited towards another which arises to our view, and whom we are informed presents an aspect still more terrific. These Guardian Angels, these Benefactors of Mankind, who, influenced by the milk of human kindness, are so benevolent as to take nations under

their fostering care, are perpetually forming plans which they tell us must be adopted, or ruin will ensue; they are not adopted, and yet we find ourselves perfectly safe; or, they are adopted, and bring on the very mischiefs against which they were proposed to defend us.

It is not requisite to quote the History of the last hundred years; it is not necessary to refer to K. William's wife plans for partitioning the Spanish Monarchy, or forming a Dutch Barrier. To *Alberoni's* projects, the events of the no search war, or those in defence of the pragmatic sanction, or the Prussian power; a mere reference to facts in every ones recollection; events which, even a few passing years, have brought in review before us, will afford an ample illustration.

Not many years since, the nation was giddy with exultation and triumph, we had concluded a war which exceeded our most sanguine expectations, and though the Minister, was of course, execrated for not trampling more effectually in the dust our prostrate foe, yet we obtained much more than the utmost object of the war. Our poor Colonists were secured from the dreadful Plots of the perfidious French, ample room was secured for them to increase and multiply through successive ages, during which their trade, confined to this country, was to raise us to most wonderful splendor and power, amply rewarding us for the millions spent in the glorious enterprize; but it happened a little oddly, that the event turned out exactly the reverse, and we totally lost our Colonies through the success of the very measures we had taken to secure them. The scenes then shifted, and England was to become an object of commiseration, or contempt. "*Her sun was to set for ever:*" but this, proved another mistake, and England, after defeat and disgrace, and losing a hundred millions to secure her Colonies, and a hundred millions in losing them, possessed a splendor and power she had never before equalled; and the Court of France, who had produced these effects, expected to rise on the ruins of

England, to wrest from her the dominion of the East and West Indies ; and through the riches derived from thence hoped to obtain the controul of all the petty Courts of Europe. Similar disappointments awaited her also ; the success of her projects involved her in the most calamitous ruin, and reduced the nation itself to such a state, that Mr. *Burke* assures us, "*He could only see a vast chasm, which once was France.*"

This change naturally produced a new project ; we joined the other powers of Europe in invading her, and it is avowed, in a respectable Publication, that while assisting them to seize her Provinces, we are to dispossess her of her Sugar Plantations : all Europe is to purchase its sugar of us, paying not only the price to our Colonists, but even a tax on it to us ; and thus they are to reward us for the assistance we give them in subjugating France. But, alas ! this admirable plan, as wise and as just as any of the preceding, seems to be in danger of becoming as futile. She has driven us from her land, overcome the intestine commotions which she says we had fomented ; and now she threatens to retaliate the attack. Her tremendous armies which, even German discipline, have in vain attempted to resist, are ready to pour into a nation, which has long had no experience of war, but what has arisen from petty civil contention. The fuel of war, she with lavish hand has been for above a century, incessantly spreading though the world, and for the first time, she seems destined to partake of the effects.

In this new and perilous situation, surely, it cannot be very improper to solicit the attention of that community who are so highly interested in the result. It, certainly, is not intended, to dispute his Majesty's prerogative of involving us in war, yet, surely, it cannot be deemed an infringement to discuss the effects we are likely to experience, and more especially if among those effects may possibly be the dreadful one, of his never having it again in his power of involving us in another. It is not even intended to

interfere with the ordinary conduct of those, to whom with great propriety the management of our wars is intrusted; but if, with great ingenuity, they contrive to bring the war home to us, it seems to be excusable if we give it some little attention, and if in some small degree, it becomes the subject of discussion.

When the High Priests of *Mars* open with oracular ambiguity their tremendous mysteries, we attend with awful reverence; when Mr. *Dundas* tells us of the justice and necessity of going to the Antipodes to deprive Tippoo Saib of his revenues and dominions: When *Lord Hawkebury* informs us, that our very existence depends on fitting out Corsairs, seizing the inhabitants of Africa, and carrying them to the West Indies; and when Mr. *Burke* tells us that our religion, our laws, our government, every thing that is dear and valuable to us, depend on our waging eternal war with the French, and extirpating them, and their principles; we listen with silent astonishment, for who can controvert what none can understand? But when a powerful army, &c. appears to be ready to land upon this Island, the danger seems to come within the limits of a common understanding. Whether Flanders belonging to one or the other of the great powers of Europe, would involve the ruin of England, may possibly, by some, be deemed a disputable position: but that an army of a Hundred Thousand Men, landed in our Island, would be rather hurtful, no man will dispute. That the French being in possession of the Alps, or their sailing on the Scheldt would be a tremendous evil, which it became us to risk every thing to avert, however obvious it may appear to the microscopic eye of an adept in politics, yet some may possibly not be able to perceive it. But were London to be laid in ruins, even a Chimney Sweeper's Boy must know that it would, at the least, be an inconvenience. In discussing this subject, we are in no danger of being charged with resorting to imaginary evils, or magnifying trivial ones, to alarm the timid and the ignorant; it is admitted to be imminent and great, and it therefore seems to be a cause which with no

great impropriety may be brought before a jury of the country.

Indeed, it appears more peculiarly proper, as it is a question not materially affected by any of those disputable points which divide the public mind; which ever side we adopt, whatever premises we assume, the deduction must be the same. If with the adversaries of the war, we say, that the French were singularly desirous of peace, and had no motive for violating it, yet their intention, and their motives are now avowed, and clearly understood: If with the friends of the war, we contend, that their pacific pretensions were insidious, that they would swallow the Continent, and only do us the favour of reserving us for the last mouthful; then the obvious inference is, that the danger which they depicted as terrific, even when uncertain and remote, is become still more so, by being immediate and probable. If it be said, that the Ministers are weak, negligent and abandoned, how dreadful must be the danger from such an Administration at such an exigency?—If on the contrary, it be alledged, that they are wise, vigilant and conscientious, what reason must we have to dread an enemy, whom, even such Ministers have not been able to keep from our shores, and how much must our terror be increased by the dire apprehension, lest at such a momentous crisis the convulsions of death, or the convulsions of Government should remove them. If on the one hand, it be affirmed, that the resources of the country have been shamefully neglected, is there not reason to fear the same negligence may precipitate our ruin, or on the other hand, have they been fully called forth, then is it evident, that they are inadequate to an effectual prosecution of the war against so powerful an enemy.

Indeed, the dreadful power of the enemy is now universally admitted. Mr. *Burke's* jargon of their disorder and imbecility, has long since been abandoned, although they were the circumstances which were held out to us as an inducement to commence the war. The hope of its speedy termination, and of

our crushing the enemy in a single campaign, was held out by Mr. *Pitt* as a reason for borrowing the whole of the six millions, though at a great disadvantage; but now he admits the power of the enemy to be so tremendous, that the ambitious views of *Lewis XIV.* and his power to effect those views, however terrific to Europe they might have been deemed, were weak and insignificant in comparison of the present power of the French Republic. Indeed, so tremendous is this power, that it is the very circumstance which is now held out as a reason for prosecuting the war. We must never, it seems, sheath the sword while a power exists so much greater than ourselves. Be it so, yet surely, If we have not merely entered into, but been foiled in the contest, it must be a reasonable ground for increasing our apprehensions. If we have entered the enemies territories to weaken and dismember them. If they have repelled us, and in return, are ready to invade us, surely, the idea of danger resulting from a mere contemplation of the power of the enemy, must be highly aggravated from the circumstance of its being now an enemy that has tried our strength, and in a conviction of our inferiority are preparing to return our assault. Mr. *Pitt* so far from disguising the power of the enemy, or the magnitude of their designs, admits them in the fullest extent; he considers it as a forlorn hope in which our only reliance is, that the power of the enemy is too enormous to be permanent.—It is, it seems, a preternatural strength, the strong convulsive agonies of death, and must precipitate the termination of existence. Admit it, yet from this very circumstance seems to arise our most serious ground of alarm.—We will suppose the French Jacobins to have exerted every nerve for a momentary effort, that they have collected into a focus, every scattered portion of strength which the French Republic affords them; that by a forced loan, they have obtained all the specie of the nation, that by the terror of the *Guilotine*, they have raised an immense temporary force, which they will be unable long to keep together. That,

to maintain even this temporary force, they have violated all property. That it must quickly fail, and then the whole fabric will be soon annihilated by the very means which have brought it into existence.— If so, what will naturally be the plan adopted by the French Government? Knowing the temporary nature of the resources they possess, feeling the unstable nature of the power they enjoy, will they not be induced to undertake a bold and desperate attempt suitable to the nature of the power and resources they possess? Protracted, defensive war, will, in such case, be ruinous to them, and the most desperate measures will become the most prudent. Suppose their situation to be desperate, desperate measures it will then become them to pursue; and their irresistible bands, when they can no longer be kept together in *France*, may be poured into our Island. If then, our Country be desolated by becoming the seat of war, our Capital burned, and our Arsenals destroyed; will it be any consolation to be told, that the grasp which has crushed us, the stroke which has destroyed our very vitals, was nothing but the preternatural efforts of the madness of expiring power? Shall we be happy when told, that, though this *Sampson* has brought on us dire and irreparable ruin, yet he participates with us, that we both lie groveling in the dust, while Russia, Austria, America, or some other power rises from our ashes? We are, indeed, told that as we have every thing at stake, every thing must be risked, and that our constitution being in danger, it becomes us to make every sacrifice to preserve it. But, are we sure, that when our Country becomes the Theatre of War, and misery, and desolation are spread through the land, we shall contemplate our glorious Constitution in Church and State, with that rapturous pleasure we felt in the moment of National prosperity?

Hence, it appears that our apprehensions from the enormous power of the enemy can scarcely be carried beyond the extent of the real danger, and that the only alleviating circumstance held out by those who

have the direction of the power of the nation, and can compare it with that of the enemy, is, the miserable hope, that, in case we can resist a confessedly almost irresistible enemy, we shall at length have the consolation of seeing him exhausted at our feet.

But the probable expectation of *France* becoming the assaillant results, not merely from the allegations of Mr. *Pitt*, that her power is both enormous and temporary. She must necessarily be stimulated to it by every circumstance which has occurred, by every motive of interest and safety; and be prompted by every passion which can be supposed to influence her public councils. A contemptuous slight of proffered friendship naturally produces the strongest and most permanent resentment; hence it is, that *France* seems to possess peculiar animosity against this country. That the arbitrary Monarchs of Europe should have manifested enmity to the rising liberties of France could excite no surprise; it was an example which threatened the subversion of their power, in proportion as it proved to be beneficial to the *French*; and the hostility of the despotic Sovereigns of Europe could produce no resentment in *France*, except what naturally resulted from such a state. But as to England, the case was different; from *her* originated those principles on which *France* had acted, and even are the basis of the Monarch's throne. England had set her the example of trampling on the Royal Authority, The degraded spectacle of the *House of Stuart*, and the prosperous state of England, had impressed on them the idea that the happiness of nations was not always commensurate with the power of the Sovereign. To England, therefore, they looked with a fraternal eye, far from considering its Monarch as a Tyrant and a Despot. The Hall of the *Jacobins* was ornamented with the Royal Flag of England, even, after the antient standard of the French Monarchs had been consigned to oblivion. It is true, as *Electors of Hanover*, the English Monarch might be supposed to have an adverse interest; but they appeared to have

such confidence that it would be lost in the superior splendor of the *British Crown*, that they even solicited his mediation to settle their differences with the other powers of Europe, and to prevent the commencement of the threatened hostilities. The marked contempt with which their proffer was received, naturally gave rise to that disgust which quickly became hatred, when they imagined, that under an insidious neutrality, we were fomenting their discords, and plotting their destruction. The open and avowed hostility of Austria, and of Prussia, seems not to have produced in France such animosity as did the supposed conduct of the British Court.

Our insular situation impressing an idea of security, has emboldened us to adopt a peculiar language and conduct. Russia from her distance, has been induced to imitate us. No other nation has ventured to pour out such torrents of low scurrility as some amongst us have uttered. Hatred and contempt must necessarily have been excited, even had we before possessed their esteem; but, our claim of the flag, of the dominion at sea, our contradictory and extraordinary claims of colonization, of no search on the Spanish coast while we confiscated those who approached our own; the spreading the flames of war, through every part of the world, notwithstanding the just and humane treaty of 1686, our preserving on the sea (because there we were most powerful) the anti-ent horrors of war, by seizing private property, while hostility by land had, by degrees, been meliorated so far, as almost universally to respect it; our even detaining neutral vessels, but, above all, our seizing the French shipping in 1755, previous to any declaration of war, had given an idea of us very unfavourable to our national character. Books had long circulated in France, stigmatizing us, as the *Savages of Europe*, and it is possible, that the idea of us, was not much improved by the changes which have taken place, in the mode of conducting the war, since we took part in it. They, possibly, attributed to us, exclusively, the idea of considering *thirty millions* of people, 'as

having no national existence, and not to be treated according to the universally received law of nations — They, possibly, suppose that we invented the strange fiction, that a nation with a thousand miles of sea coast, of which not a single port was actually blockaded, was to be considered as being wholly and constantly besieged, that every neutral vessel bound for it might be liable to seizure; and they may, perhaps, allege, that we formed the plan of cutting off their customary supply of corn, to raise discontent in the country, by starving the women and the children, as we must know that the armies would certainly be at all even supplied; and, lastly, they say, that the moment we abandoned our neutrality, all the defenceless nations of Europe were ordered to join us in the war, — a practice, which they say, was never before resorted to, by any people. Nor can it be deemed extraordinary, if such a concurrence of circumstances should have produced very powerful effects on a people who may be supposed to consider themselves as the first nation in the universe, as to population, power, literature, and civilization; and especially when they consider themselves as having been thus treated by a nation whom they, probably, consider as infinitely beneath them. — As every powerful passion may have thus excited them to turn their arms particularly against us, so their interest, as to the general conduct of the war, may have suggested the same measure. However, inconsiderable may be our actual accession of force to the combined powers, yet, the peculiarity of our situation enables us to give a considerable impetus to their operations. Surrounded by the sea, we are more removed from the effects of war; and our commerce and national credit, however diminished, enable us to replenish the exhausted coffers of the Allied Powers; may they not then be tempted to endeavour to transfer the seat of war to this country, as an effectual means of cutting off those resources which enable the Continental Powers to perpetuate the war?

But not merely passion may prompt, and expediency suggest this measure, but is it not possible, that

they may consider themselves as *even necessitated* to adopt it? May they not say, "*Powerfully attacked, for dark, ambiguous, unexplained purposes; England at length, breaks the gloomy silence. She tells us, that she will not even treat of peace. Behold the dreadful crisis, when in drawing the sword they threw away the scabbard—they have pronounced the dreadful sentence.—Delenda est Carthago—Delenda est Carthago are we not then necessitated to reply. They seem to have left us no alternative, but the subversion of their government, or the abandonment of our own.*"

Thus it should seem probable, that their threatened Invasion, may be more than mere gasconade; and it may be worth our while, seriously, to inquire, whether it be really intended as a formidable, effectual attack, or whether it be only intended as a feint to alarm us, and divert our attention, while they are really carrying on some other plan? If they have sufficient motives for undertaking the expedition, then for the solution of this important question, it will be next requisite to inquire, what degree of probability exists of their being able to effect their purpose? because, however strong may be their disposition, yet, if their means be totally inadequate, it is not probable, they will undertake it; at least, if they do, we may, in such case, be more easy as to the result. However loud, the dog may bark at the moon, she still keeps on her way, regardless of his noise.

But, at the same time, as it becomes us not to give way to causeless alarm, it behoves us carefully to examine the subject; heedless confidence, founded in pride and ignorance, is to the full, as dangerous as causeless timidity. Though not the most *pleasing*, yet, is he the most *useful* Friend, who, instead of flattering us, that nothing but flowry paths lie before us, calls on us, carefully to examine the deceptive appearance, to see that no dark abyss open under our unwary step; examine how we may pursue in safety the dangerous path; or if, on careful examination, the danger appears to be unavoidable, exhorts us to return, and abandon the fruitless task.

If we in attempting to subvert other governments, should be in danger of producing the destruction of our own. If in spreading the flames of war through the world, they should be on the point of reverberating on ourselves, we may then possibly contemplate the present war through a less pleasing medium, and may possibly be willing to return into the bosom of peace with less reluctance.

Melancholy is the reflection, that the security of our situation derived from the surrounding waves, instead of becoming as it might be supposed a source of peace, and of that melioration of the human mind, which is the natural result of peace, has, in fact, produced effects exactly the reverse; and from this very circumstance may be traced every detestable trait of the British character. From hence, some say, has arisen intolerable pride, and insolence towards other nations. From hence, they say, we have been able to oppress other nations in a degree far beyond our proportionate degree of strength.

Other nations when contemplating objects of ambition have been necessitated to retain a considerable portion of their strength, for home defence; we, on the contrary, have been accustomed to pour out our whole strength for offensive war. To such a degree have we carried this system, that in 1745, we had not retained sufficient force to suppress a despicable insurrection, and even resorted to foreign troops for a defence. Hence we have derived such confidence in our own safety, such a persuasion, that we are exempt from the calamities of war, that to intimate the possibility of it, is almost deemed disaffection to the State, or, at least, will be received with as marked contempt as the admonitions of a Laputan, on the danger resulting from the cometary orbs, or the howlings of an Indian on the eclipses of the luminaries.

Fearful of hurting the high-toned feelings of the *True born Englishman*, we tremble to suppose it possible for the French to pass the twenty mile ditch which separates us; we must not presume to imagine

the possibility of their beating our fleet, nor ask, whether, if while the fleets are engaged, troops may not effect the passage; we will not even ask whether, in detached portions they may not take unknown tracts through the boundless ocean, and center upon our coasts; nor will we suggest a surmise, whether *Tburiot's* landing a thousand men and taking *Carrick-fergus*, at a time when the French Navy was almost annihilated, be not something like a proof of its being possible.

But, here, British Heroism boldly exclaims, Ah! Ah! Let the *Atbeists*, the *Regicides*, the *Sans Culottes* come, I warrant *Britans* will give them a drubbing. Indeed! and is it an invariable fixed Law of Nature, that *Englismen must always conquer!* is it an axiom to be assumed, or is it a proposition to be examined? Will not Spain prove that we may be beaten, and America that we may be beaten, by those whom we have despised. But this notable point, we mean not to dispute. We will take it for granted, that the French will be defeated, and that we preserve our constitution, our religion and our laws.

Let us suppose, our *Game Laws*, and our *Ecclesiastical Courts* to remain intire; that neither a doxology or a creed, be innovated on; that the thrones of the Bishops stand firm as a rock, and their lawn sleeves be unsinged; let the Corinthian capital of society still remain, with the beautiful ranks, and subordinations, which distinguish our *excellent* Constitution in *Church* and *State*.

Let us merely review the calamities which will befall the Swinish Multitude, and this may, in some degree, be requisite, even though the alarm of an *Invasion* be totally unfounded. Admitting it to be an artifice of our enemies to effect some other design, or an ingenious device of the Ministry to enlist alarmists: yet, as Ministers have declared, that the war was absolutely necessary to prevent the French coming to attack us, and therefore was defensive, may it not be infered that, if we miscarry, in effecting the object, we shall finally be exposed to these dangers

which the war was undertaken to avert, and as, notwithstanding the prodigious and unexpected success we have experienced, yet, as it is not quite certain that we shall succeed in destroying the *Jacobin Government* of France, as some people are so incredulous as to think, that we shall never succeed in placing little *Capet* upon the throne; a measure which our Ministers have declared to be absolutely necessary for our security; may it not be inferred, from the allegations of the Ministers themselves, that the French Invasion is an event to which we may be exposed, should the war prove finally unsuccessful.

Notwithstanding the great piety which so universally pervades the nation, and more particularly the higher orders of the State, and, notwithstanding the *Atheism* and Impiety of the French, yet, in case of an Invasion, it will hardly be deemed quite prudent to rely on supernatural assistance; it will certainly be reckoned rather more satisfactory to have some visible human mode of defence, something more than the armies of the Kings of *Brentford*, or *Falstaff's* men in *buckram*. Let those who know the military force in this kingdom say, whether it be equal to the contest. The military force, indeed! perhaps some will exclaim, Is the military force only to be reckoned on? If the French have risen in an immense body, if they have manifested unexampled energy in defence of Poverty, Misery, and the Guillotine, with what energy, with what unanimity, will Englishmen rise in defence of a Constitution, which is the wonder and admiration of the universe? of a Religion which is the purest and the most excellent that ever did or ever will exist! and of those admirable laws which some few people may, possibly, be rich enough to indulge themselves in the luxury of appealing to? but, however, excellent these excellent things may be in themselves, or how much soever we may admire them, while smoaking our pipes, yet, I do not remember that we have manifested any wonderful alacrity in fighting for them. That is a task which has usually been undertaken by *Gentlemen*, who are willing to run the risk

of being knocked on the head, for *sixpence* per day.— We have been told, that our religion and liberties were in horrible danger in 1688, 1715, 1745, and 1755, yet I do not recollect, that the people armed *a la mode Francoise*, nay, I never heard that our *excellent* Government was ever so contaminated with French principles, as to think of putting the people in a state of requisition. Even, in 1780, when a few people bought muskets to defend their houses from the rabble, the measure was animadverted on in some remarkable letters; and the *Irish Volunteers* have been supposed to have produced effects, not very commendatory of arming the people. Indeed it is a measure that might be attended with some inconvenience, for, however, loudly they might vociferate *Church and King*, when first armed, yet, as the *Swinish Multitude* are rather unstable, if they should take a fancy to change the cry to *Liberty and Equality*, the Attorney General might not be able to find parchment to draw the informations, as they might demur to giving up their *drum heads* for that purpose.

Hence, it may be surmised, that the people will not feel themselves disposed to rise in a body to fight, nor is it probable, that the measure will be insisted on by those who govern us. They will rather be disposed to follow the established mode, which has been practised since the Revolution, of protecting the Religion and Liberty of England with foreign troops; a method which may have arisen from the repugnance which is felt to shedding *English blood!* and by which a very beneficial commercial intercourse is preserved between *Germany and England*.

Should the French attempt, at any time, to invade England, with a powerful armament, we suppose the force to repel them will be such regular forces as have been carefully preserved in Barracks and the Militia, if it be deemed proper. The deficiency will be supplied by troops to be drawn from Germany, for that purpose. And in proportion as we draw the troops from Germany to England, the French will, in like case, be enabled to draw theirs and

the whole change may then consist in a movement of the armies from Germany to England.

What would be the final issue of such a war, I will not imagine. The existence of it, and its unavoidable effects are the great and important evils. In all political events, the apprehended effects are rarely realized. Those which are experienced in the contest, are the real and important ones. On the event of the American contest, we were told, by the respective partizans, depended the very existence of the respective countries: we miscarried in the event, and the miscarriage was unimportant. Had America miscarried, she also would, probably, have found the effects as insignificant. The mischiefs, and calamities, of the contest were the only certain and calculable evils. If, then, the Allied Army, fighting on English ground, be crowned with conquest, still those who inhabit the Country, will scarcely experience the difference between victory and defeat. In war, the distinction of *Friend* and *Foe*, of the conquered, or the conquering, are scarcely to be perceived; wherever an army comes, it will be supplied, though famine overspread the land; wherever the conquering army comes, all property vanishes, wherever the conquered flies, desolation is left behind it. A Conqueror has just returned amongst us to receive the laurel at our hands, let him tell how many thousands died of famine, because the cattle were taken from the ploughs to convey his artillery.

If we have brought such horrors and desolation on other countries, can we complain if at length, we have to partake of the bitter cup, under such circumstances rage and indignation against the accidental instruments of the vengeance we experience, will seize our haughty spirits: but dispositions of a different nature, it will better behove us to encourage. If a powerful enemy should invade our land, and banish from it happiness and peace, let us recollect how many nations we have involved in those calamities of war, which we are at length destined to experience.

8
ON

JACOBINISM,

BY

WILLIAM FOX.

LONDON:

SOLD BY M. GURNEY, No. 128, HOLBORN HILL.

1794.

THREE-PENCE, OR FIVE FOR A
SHILLING.

The Jacobin.

IT has frequently been objected to controversial writers, that by using words without defining their import, the subjects which they bring before the public are involved in great obscurity, and their discussion frequently extended to almost infinity. However certain the fact, yet the propriety of its being brought as a charge against our fraternity I never could admit. By carefully avoiding definitions and explanations, the seeds of controversy are carefully preserved to engender future ones, as *Bug-Doctors* and *Ratcatchers* suffer some vermin to escape, that they and their brethren may find future employment: And why should not *Authors* as well as *Rat-Catchers*, *Clergy*, *Lawyers*, *Nobles*, and other orders of men, be influenced by the *Esprit du Corps*: Why should not they be entitled to praise, for preserving the fields of controversy and transmitting them unimpaired for the benefit of future Authors, instead of dilapidating and destroying the inheritance by bringing controversies to a termination by the fatal expedient of explanation and definition. But though this be true as to those ordinary controversies, whose principal end is finding employment and food for authors, yet are there a certain order of words, and a certain species of controversy, of so very different a nature as might induce one to wish they might be excepted. These words instead of merely wasting ink, deluge the world with blood; they not only light up the fire of controversy, but produce real conflagrations: instead of amusing the speculative and the idle, they agitate the mass of people, and spread horror, confusion, and desolation through the earth.

That words of such importance should be accurately defined, that controversies productive of such effects, should be fully explained, seems not to be unreasonable; yet, alas! it is such words that remain peculiarly undefined, and it is such controversies that are more especially involved in obscurity; we see

them generate in quick succession: like meteors they rise and take their course through the political hemisphere, terrifying and confounding the ignorant multitude.

As these words are invented to deceive, they have been peculiarly resorted to in that state of this country, in which those who govern have found themselves necessitated, in some degree, to resort to *artifice* to obtain or maintain dominion, no longer deeming it expedient to rely totally on *force*. From the commencement of the last century, a few cant words have been the powerful means of producing all the revolutions and events we have experienced. It commenced with *Puritan*, was succeeded by *Malignant*, and was terminated by *Papist*: this last word produced our *glorious* Revolution, and in connection with *Pretender*, generated the Hanover succession; which being endangered by the word *Church*, by calling to its assistance the words *Liberty*, *Property*, and *Balance of Power*, it became triumphant until the present moment, when threatened, with danger by the dreadful words *Rights of Man*, it has been deemed expedient to resort to the word *Jacobin* for support. Our domestic factions have indeed in the interim adopted *Court*, and *Country*, for the subordinate purpose of electioneering, riots, and murders, and North America obtained independence under the auspices of the word *Tory*.

It might be imagined that words of such importance, and productive of such extensive effects, should have a clear and definite import; and that when applied to discriminate the characters and principles of men, it should be with the most accurate precision; but unfortunately this is the very reverse of the fact. *Puritan* equally characterised *Archbishop Abbot*, and the wildest and most illiterate enthusiast of the age, and *Malignant* was indiscriminately applied to an infinite variety of dissimilar characters. *Papist* we apply to *Father Paul*, and to *St. Dominic*, to *Berrington*, and *Bellarmino*. *Pretender* was a nick name assigned to an individual by an Act of Parliament, and as to

Church it never was understood whether it meant, Articles of Faith, which scarce any man believes, ceremonies and forms which every man of sense despises, or an order of men who claim a right to a tenth of every man's labour, in consideration of their wearing black coats, white surplices, and lawn sleeves. The word *Liberty* imported a foreign Prince, coming with a foreign army, and possessing the throne of his wife's father; and *Property*, some say, meant the depriving a *King*, *Clergy*, and *Nobles* of a neighbouring island of their property, and bestowing it on foreigners: if we conquer American islands, for the purpose of enslaving the Africans, we are told the war is undertaken in defence of *Liberty*; and if we plunder and desolate Asia, the undertaking is absolutely necessary in defence of our *Rights* and *Property*. As to *Whig* and *Tory*, they were terms of abuse, as indefinite in their meaning, as those which the ladies of St. Giles's and Billingsgate bestow on each other: the author of this has been ever deemed a *Tory*, yet does his Toryism bear as little resemblance to that of *Filmer's* or *Sacheverell's*, as the Whiggism of *Mr. Burke* to *Dr. Price's*. Lastly, the *Balance of Power* means perpetual war, on a series of the most extravagant and incongruous pretexts: It meant *King William's* ambitious project of conquering France, it meant carrying on a bloody expensive war, for the emolument of the *Duke of Marlborough*, and it meant annexing Bremen and Verden to Hanover.

If then these words have been successively adopted without any definite import, merely to enable the ambitious and the crafty to carry on their designs; it will become us to be cautious and suspicious when new terms and additional cant phrases are introduced into our political vocabulary: it will behove us at least carefully to analyse their import, and inquire whether they be introduced as the watch words of faction, to disguise unexplained projects of dark ambition, or as the signals to stimulate a licentious rabble to conflagration and to murder: our just suspicion may be excited, if like preceding words they

bear no definite sense, and thereby appear to be well adapted to enable a party to stigmatise their adversaries; for in such proportion as these terms are equivocal and destitute of meaning, are they adapted to this purpose. It will become us to endeavour to analyse them, as many objects of terror lose their effect, in proportion as they are explored: it is undefined danger which operates most powerfully, and the mind can meet even real danger with greater firmness, when we thoroughly comprehend its nature and extent.

In this moment when *Jacobinism* is first sounded in our ears, it becomes peculiarly proper for us to explain its rise for the benefit of future generations; for however terrible this word may now appear, yet to posterity it may excite no other feeling than contempt for our folly, and curiosity to inquire into its cause: the origin and history of Whig and Tory have occasioned elaborate discussion, and as a subject of discussion, *Jacobin* may be transmitted to posterity.

Loudly as *Jacobin* is resounded through the land, yet have none condescended to explain its meaning; that must be gleaned from desultory harangues on its terrible nature, and effects; from thence we learn that it is a principle which is rapidly spreading through Europe, threatening its general order, the subversion of its Governments, the annihilation of its Property, the destruction of its Laws, and its religion; introducing in their place Atheism, Anarchy, Poverty, and Misery. In this delineation however highly coloured, perhaps, it must be admitted that there is so near a resemblance to fact in some of its parts as to deserve accurate investigation, and is certainly of importance sufficient to demand our serious attention: it relates to the most important subjects which can interest our feelings, for without social order, without Government, without Laws, alas! what is Man, and what is the earth which he inhabits. Some indeed will laugh at this statement; they will ask what is that general order which exists in Europe? What is there but an he-

terogenous mass of Republicanism, of Monarchy, of Despotism, of Popery, of Protestantism, of Oppression, and of Liberty, in all their diversified forms? What relation can they have to each other? What common principles can they possess, deserving the name of system? Shall Britons be told of any analogy she bears to the vassalage of Hungary or to Neapolitan Despotism?—I will make no such objection—I will consider most of the nations of Europe as derived from one common or similar origin. I will consider it as a bed of flowers, which when first planted presented to the eye nothing but dull uniformity, but which from accident, from diversity of culture, and of soil, opens to our view an immense variety, a striking dissimilarity, which banishes from the imagination of a cursory spectator the slenderest idea of system; though the accurate and careful observer will readily distinguish the *varieties* of the same *species*, as readily as the different *species* in the same *genus*. I will then readily admit that there is a general order, a similarity, among the nations of Europe, deserving the name of system; and I will even admit that *Jacobinism* threatens this system with destruction: but here my concessions terminate. If I am told that Anarchy must ensue, that social order and government will be banished from the earth, and that property will be annihilated, for laws no longer will exist to foster and protect it;—if I am told this, I pause. I will not easily suppose that the author of the universe will admit so foul a blot in the creation. I see indeed a vast mass of moral and physical evil which neither reason nor revelation explains to my limited imperfect comprehension; but I look around me and trace the analogy of nature, and I see a universal tendency of order from confusion to arise, and improved existence to spring from apparent dissolution; my hope is then enlivened, nor can I with Mr. BURKE sit down in despair and imagine that the fair face of the creation is about to be involved in “A MASS OF RUINS.” I cannot believe that the dark cloud, which overhangs our hemisphere, will involve

us in eternal night. I consider the nature of man ; I open the page of history, and examine his recorded annals ; I here trace human kind through every gradation of improvement, from the untutored savage running wild in his native woods, to man in the highest state of polished society which has hitherto appeared in the world ; I then examine the present face of the earth, as presented to our view with the accuracy of modern disquisition, I find a wonderful concurrence, both the historian and the traveller bear one united and important testimony, that Man, whatever may be his degree of civilization, however opposite the nature of the climate he enjoys, or the soil he possesses, however diversified his manners, or abundant or deficient are his advantages ; whatever may have been his original situation, or however varied the circumstances which through a succession of ages have befallen him, has an uniform disposition, apparently inherent principle leading him to coalesce into some kind of order or government, though that order and that government necessarily partake of an infinite variety, resulting from the diversity of the circumstances above enumerated. It appears that this mental attraction is as universal a law of his nature, as that attraction which pervades inanimate existence appears to be a universal law of matter ; and as little ground is there to expect that any partial convulsions ; however they may astonish and afflict us, will dissolve this principle in the one case more than in the other. There is no foundation for expecting such a dissolution of the bonds of society any more than the principal of material existence, until He, on whose will all things depend, shall dissolve these laws of nature which from him originated, reducing this system to the original chaos, or producing those changes of which we can have no idea. If then it should seem that order and government were coeval with man, and that with man only they can terminate ; If it appears that anarchy is so abhorrent to our nature, as that the political body has as an invariable tendency to counteract it, as the natural

body has to discharge the morbid matter with which it may be loaded, shall any one dare to tell us that *Jacobinism* will break up civil society, destroy social order, and introduce perpetual anarchy and ruin? Yes, there are those who will dare to tell us this; because there is no falsehood so palpable, no absurdity so gross, but what the wicked will endeavour to impose upon the weak. If there have been those who could summon the public to see a man in a **QUART BOTTLE**, and if among the public there were those who crowded to behold it, why may there not be those who will tell us, that unless we take Paris, and guillotine **ROBERSPIERRE**, the French will kill one another, dissolve all government, introduce anarchy, and destroy all property, and why may there not be amongst us those who will believe them?

In repelling the clamors against *Jacobinism*, it is not necessary accurately to appreciate its merits, or the effects it may produce. The charge against it is not merely that it will destroy the general order of Europe, but that no other system of social order will arise; not only that it will subvert the existing governments, but **ALL** government; not only shake property, but *annihilate* it; not merely *impair* the force of our laws, but dissolve **ALL** law, leave nothing but anarchy behind, seating us "*in the midst of ruins.*" This is a charge not merely against *Jacobinism*, but against the order of nature, against the constitution of human kind, against universal experience. The charge is so absurd that those who frame it are perpetually confuting themselves; see, say they, what a horrible government *Jacobinism* has produced in France, a government worse than *Caligula's*. And was not *Caligula's* a government? is not a worse than *Caligula's* a government? What you assert, and what we call on you to prove, is that *Jacobinism* will dissolve **ALL** government. So violating all propriety of language, they confound *confiscation* with *dissolution* of property. How far the confiscations of property in *Ireland*, in *England*, or

in France may have been cruel, respecting individuals; whether harsh or unjust in their nature, injurious or beneficial to the community, are separate considerations. What we call on them to prove is, that property either in Ireland, in England, or in France, has thereby been *annihilated*.

Having fully proved that however extensive the progress of Jacobinism may be, yet that she will leave government, social order, property and law behind her. We will next enter on what may be deemed a rather more difficult inquiry, we will endeavour to discover whether the effects of this progress will be injurious, or beneficial: to predict, with any degree of precision, the effects which will be produced, or the exact nature of the governments which will subsist, would be folly in the extreme; leading traits, and general tendencies only, we will undertake to discuss. We will not look into the declaration of the Rights of Man, nor will we take for our guide this or that plan of a constitution; we may indeed rejoice to see principles and systems of benevolence, and justice, disseminated among mankind, because the effects must be beneficial; much more must we exult when they are disseminated by those who govern, even though by themselves they are disregarded, because thereby those principles become more operative. When those who govern France lay down systems of morality, and benevolence, as the avowed rules of their conduct, or Mr. PITT pours out his eloquence against our colonial slavery, we are not to imagine that they will restrain themselves in their ambitious pursuits, by such systems, or such declamations, which they may have adopted, for temporary, and particular purposes; but we will exult in this, that in trampling them under foot, they will not be able to destroy their effects.

In ascertaining the future state of Europe, we are rather to look to general tendencies, than to particular events, which however calamitous can prove but partial. Order, and Governments, must necessarily arise, which may reasonably be expected to be su-

perior to prior governments, in proportion to the improved state of knowledge, and society. If in a barbarous age, a savage banditti quickly formed into order, and government; if, though the foundations were laid in rape, and robbery, the superstructure has become the admiration of successive ages, can we imagine that any situation, to which Europe may be reduced, by temporary convulsions, will become a bar to splendid improvements? Suppose, then Jacobinism, or the confederacy to destroy Jacobinism, were to produce an anarchy, as deplorable as that in which Europe was involved when over-run by savage plunderers, and that governments, or tyrannies, as uncouth were to be obtruded on us, yet may it naturally be inferred that the present improved state of human knowledge will operate powerfully, and that governments will gradually arise, as superior to the existing ones as the present state of the human mind is superior to what its state was at the period in which the existing governments of Europe originated. As the convulsions occasioned by Jacobinism can be but temporary, so it may be hoped they may be but partial. If it be a principle operating to the subversion of the general system of Europe, convulsions might reasonably be expected, as violent as those we witness; but as that which is denominated the system of Europe exists in very different degrees, and circumstances, different consequences may result. Where the ancient system of Europe has mouldered under the hand of time, Jacobinism may coalesce without necessarily producing much disorder. Let us then, examine the nature of this system of order, and government, which, we are told, pervades Europe, and which Jacobinism threatens with destruction; from whence we may possibly learn more precisely the effects to be expected.

The system of European governments originated in bands of ferocious and barbarous conquerors, issuing from the wildest and most uncultivated parts of Europe, and overspreading those nations of it, which had in some small degree been civilized by the ro-

man conquests. The countries were divided among the conquerors ; the inhabitants were enslaved, and attached to the land for its cultivation ; the leaders of these bands became Dukes, and Counts, of their respective portions of the conquered lands ; those titles importing a subordinate sovereignty, the Supreme being little more than nominal. The General, or Chief Commander, became, indeed, King : but being chosen from among his fellow soldiers, he possessed little authority. His principal importance was derived from the share of the spoil he possessed. On the possessions, then obtained by the sword, the possessors were soon after deprived of a considerable portion by the Clergy, who, availing themselves of the ignorance of the age, held forth to others the prospect of another world, as the means of obtaining a considerable portion of the present. They obtained grants from the conquerors, to such an extent as to enable the clergy to contend for a domination, founded on mental terror, as powerful as that which had been derived from the sword. Such was the origin of the sovereigns, the nobles, and the clergy of Europe.

To trace the origin of power, or of property, with a view to shake their present existence, would be absurd in the extreme. What power, and what property, could bear such a scrutiny ? But this system of which we speak was not merely in its origin unjust, but in its nature injurious to the property it had usurped, and to any government which could possibly take place. The earth, the source of our existence, and labour, was possessed by bodies of men of so peculiar a structure as to destroy, in a great degree, its value to society. To them the property was limited. No persons, no connections, no circumstances, could, while the system existed, circulate it again among the people. It was a gulph continually swallowing, but never giving up. The individual possessors had only a life interest ; the property descended by the nature of the tenure, in the one case to successive bodies of men, in the other to single individuals ; while the

present possessors were disabled from transmitting the inheritance as motives of consanguinity, or friendship, might prompt; placing the earth in the possession of a succession of individuals, all of them, deprived of the most powerful incentives for its improvement. It is unnecessary to detail at length this system. Its mischievous nature has been brought to the test of experience. It has uniformly appeared that in every country, in proportion as it operated, the country suffered. Wherever a single city, or a despicable and worthless district, became emancipated from the yoke, it flourished. When Philip of Spain, to terminate a rebellion, cast off the most inconsiderable part of his dominions, it instantly rose to wealth and splendour, though a spot peculiarly destitute of natural value. And with respect to England, though by no means distinguishable for its intrinsic value, or natural advantages, yet, from a concurrence of circumstances, this system having been much more innovated on than in any other considerable country in Europe, it appears that her agriculture, her wealth, and her prosperity, have increased in proportion; and it is observable that to the small remnant of this system, yet existing among us, the principal impediments to our further improvement are to be attributed and the principal defects in our laws and civil policy, are to be traced. No less hostile is this system to government than to property: The privileged orders have uniformly exerted the power, derived from the property they possess, to overawe and control the existing government, whatever may be its form; to obtain privileges, and exemptions incompatible with every idea of good government; and to throw the burden of the state upon those who are destitute of the means of supporting it. And it has been only in proportion to the subversion of this system, that the governments of any of the countries of Europe have been able to exercise their proper functions.

As, then, we are told that Jacobinism is a principle operating to the subversion of the general order

of Europe, of its property, its religion, its governments, and its laws, it necessarily follows, that it is the system above described which must be alluded to; because there is no other general order which pervades the nations of Europe. Nothing but this that can be denominated its system. No other principle which appertains indiscriminately to their laws, their religion, their governments, and their property. And if so, it must be inferred that whatever principles prevail in Europe, subverting this system, must be Jacobinism. And if this system be hostile to social order, to good government, to just ideas of property, then the prevalence of correct ideas on property; on government, and on social order, must be Jacobinism; and in proportion as knowledge is diffused, and ignorance is dispelled, Jacobinism must prevail. It has no relation to forms of government, any further than as forms are connected with and derived from the ancient system. Under various forms the present system of Europe subsists; and under various forms of them may Jacobinism prevail. It does not necessarily follow that it must subvert the existing governments, any farther than as those governments partake of the general system. In France, and Germany, where revolving centuries had, but in a small degree, affected it, Jacobinism might naturally be expected to produce strong convulsions. Affecting extensive possessions, and numerous privileges and rights, the contest could not be trifling, or the wounds slight: but in England, and the other nations of Europe, where the reformation had, in a great degree, subverted a principal branch of the ancient system and, by its effects, materially sapped the whole fabric, it does not necessarily follow that Jacobinism must produce a subversion of existing governments or changes in the general system of laws: no branch of property need be materially affected: no bodies or description of men need be exposed to any considerable change in their situation in society, nor even an individual suffer any inconvenience beyond those to which the most common vicissitudes of human

affairs subject them. Let us suppose the adoption of all the projects of the DUKE of RICHMOND, the maddest and most violent Jacobine which this country ever has produced; projects which in him originated, which no mad projector, no speculative politician, ever before him thought of; and, which, though he may have been succeeded by a train of distant followers and faint imitators, yet, perhaps, but for him might have remained despised, or unknown: projects which excited the disapprobation of every rational and well informed mind, a disapprobation approximating to disgust, when, they saw crude and untried experiments suggested to agitate a licentious populace, in the most critical moment, which a succession of ages could possibly have produced. That at such a crisis they were rash and dangerous few can doubt, yet is there no foundation for supposing, that, had they been peaceably and generally adopted any inconvenience could have resulted: for instance it is said he suggested in the House of Lords, the idea of seizing the Church Lands; but is it to be imagined that he, or any other man, would have had the assurance to propose a confiscation of all the impropriations, and advowsons, comprehending a considerable portion of the landed property of the kingdom, which had been transmitted through a succession of purchasers, for full and valuable considerations. has France done it, France could not do it, for no such property had she to confiscate; but suppose he had such a design, fortunately the only regulation which is proposed respecting it, must have effectually defeated it. This property is derived from the labour and property of man, employed in the cultivation of the soil; it now possesses distinctive marks; if it be in danger from the hands of the plunderer, that danger must be more imminent because, in its present state, it is by those distinctive marks obtruded on his notice, and is there an individual to be found who proposes any other reform respecting this property, than commuting it for an equivalent share of land; the very measure which must effectually secure

it, by combining it in one general interest with the landed property of the kingdom. As to the dignitaries of our church, they cannot be affected by any reform which relates to their successors, and the church has already been plundered to such an extent as to render the remainder of its property secure to its present possessors, from the insignificance of its value as a life inheritance. As to the House of Lords, let us suppose, the insignificance to which they are reduced, and the contempt with which, for above a century, they have been treated by the House of Commons, should induce an idea that they are useless ; what material detriment can they, as individuals, receive by an abolition of their order, and the faint shadow of its ancient power. All the feignioral rights and territorial privileges which distinguished the ancient Barons of England have been long since abolished : estates are of the same nature, and of equal value, whether in possession of a Lord or a Commoner ; and it is from their property, not their titles ; their present importance results : so unimportant are titles in this country that when unaccompanied by estates they have remained unclaimed as not worth acceptance.

It does not even follow that the progress of Jacobinism will produce greater changes in the nature of the monarchical power than what has resulted from past events, or may result from future ones : the name and form of monarchy may subsist, though Jacobinism prevail, and it is only the name and form which can be permanent ; its real nature must necessarily be subject to imperceptible changes, his present Majesty bears no more resemblance to a *Tudor*, a *Plantagenet*, or an *Alfred*, than a modern Doge of Venice does to the ancient ones.

But though it does not follow, that, Jacobinism from its nature will materially affect any great existing interest amongst us, yet does it not follow but it *may*. It is possible, nay probable, that it may produce calamities similar to those which have befallen France, and inferior in degree only in proportion to the inferiority of the several interests concerned in the contest. A

straw, or a feather, may be contended for with as much violence, and as much obstinacy, as the most important right, and the most essential interest. The Clergy may be tenacious of litigated tythes, and ecclesiastical courts: the privilege of imprisoning a Quaker during life for his Easter Offering, may to them appear an object beyond all price. So our Peers may deluge the nation in blood, to preserve the important privilege of assembling in an old barn, dressed in red cloaks, to have culprits dragged before them, and then be insulted with the threat, that if they acquit the criminal they shall be stigmatized as partners in his guilt.

If Jacobinism be the progress of human knowledge subverting ancient systems, founded on ignorance and superstition, can it be destroyed by imprisoning or hanging a few noisy demagogues, or, even by Mr. JENKINSON's conducting our army to Paris, and guillotining *Roberespierre*. No! The English, the American, and the French Revolutions, are merely the channels in which Jacobinism has flowed: had they never taken place, had those countries never had existence, the mighty torrent would have rolled, its course only would have been varied. Originating in the art of Printing, having disseminated knowledge, the annihilation of the knowledge it has spread, nay, of the art itself is indispensibly necessary to destroy it. It is not Mr. BURKE's execration of reason and philosophy; it is not his admonishing us to cherish our prejudices because they are prejudices; nor is it the applause he bestows on the happy ignorance of the middle ages, and his lamentation on modern innovation, which will stop the progress of Jacobinism. No! you must look to a far more adequate means: have you any hope that a new inundation of Goths and Vandals will annihilate all traces of existing knowledge from Europe and America? this and this only, can give any well founded hope.

As the interests and motives must be extremely trivial and partial, which can excite an opposition to Jacobinism, so its friends can have as little pretence

for endangering the public peace, to promote and secure it. The progress of Jacobinism is amply secure, without the aid of the Duke of Richmond or Thomas Paine inciting the body of the people to assume the government: the progress of knowledge has given them importance in the state, and in proportion to its future progress will their importance increase: fitted to assume an important rank in society, they will need no incitement, they will assume and it of course, with safety to the public.

With no important interest of the community in dispute, yet, is it not improbable, that the public may be convulsed with fierce, if not bloody contests: a licentious mob may rise; "No Jacobin," may become the successor to "No Papists"; murder and conflagration may spread around. Of a conduct founded in ignorance no estimate can be formed, and those who let loose the mischief may be themselves the victims; the safety of a King or Bishops may prove but insecure, if dependent on the piety, or loyalty, even, of a Church and King mob, should they believe the dearness of porter resulted from monarchy, or that the destruction of episcopacy would raise the price of wages.

If moderation and reason be not terms bordering on sedition, it may become us to listen to their dictates: those who possess earthly power may recollect that they are not omnipotent; that they cannot interrupt the course of nature, they tell us a mighty torrent has burst forth; it rests with them either to guide it through the land, that it may fertilise, and enrich; or by vainly attempting forcibly to confine it in the bowels of the earth, convulse the land, and spread horror around them.

If the DUKE of RICHMOND has endangered the public peace, by inciting the mass of the people to claim a share in the Government, before the progress of civilization and knowledge has qualified them for the important situation; let it be recollected, that, the danger results from our laws and police being adapted to render them profligate and corrupt; and to revise and reform them, is the appropriate remedy to the threatened danger. ——— FINIS.

ON THE
RENEWAL
OF THE
EAST INDIA CHARTER.

BY
WILLIAM FOX.

LONDON:

SOLD BY M. GURNEY, No. 128, HOLBORN HILL,

1794.

(PRICE THREE-PENCE, OR FIVE FOR A
SHILLING.)

WERE the real dignity and value of the human character to be estimated merely by the importance of the situation which is assumed; and were we to take it for granted that those who exercise authority always possess talents adequate to the difficulty, and integrity proportioned to the importance, of their stations; it might then naturally be inferred that those who now exercise the British government are the wisest and the most virtuous of the human race: or as the authority they have assumed seems to be of such a nature, as is hardly fit to be intrusted to frail mortals; it might be imagined, that some beings of more than human origin had condescended to visit this happy island, and assume the seat of legislation, and the reins of government.

To exercise dominion even over this island, amidst the discordant interests of the various parts of the community, might call for no common share of human wisdom: nor would a less portion of integrity and virtuous fortitude be requisite to guide, with impartiality, the public councils, to guard the general interests of the state, from being sacrificed to interested combinations; and the rights of the weaker and more defenceless parts of the community from the oppression of the powerful.

But we will admit that mere mortals may be adequate to the task of governing ten millions of people, amongst whom they live, and with whose manners they are intimately acquainted; and, diversified as the various interests amongst us are, yet possibly they may be so balanced and combined, that the government may be conducted with tolerable impartiality, even though those who govern us should not possess perfect angelic purity.

But, to engage in a more enlarged sphere than this, the human powers seem not to be adapted; for, whatever dignified titles kings, ministers, or parliaments may assume, I do not remember that it has ever been fully proved that they are either omnipotent, or omniscient; and, if so, it should seem to follow that, being limited in their faculties and powers, they exceed the bounds of legitimate authority when they exercise that species, or extent of dominion, to which human nature seems to be inadequate. When the exercise of power is extended beyond these limits, it may be denominated outrage, plunder, and oppression; but it cannot be deemed government.

These sentiments, obvious as they appear, do not seem to prevail very forcibly in the British cabinet. The government of this nation, arduous as might be the task properly to conduct it, they deem to be far from equal to the extent of their genius; and it almost sinks into insignificance amidst their vast and diversified plans. They can sit in the council-chamber at St. James's, or in St. Stephen's Chapel, and give laws to the most distant regions, while the governors and governed are mutually ignorant of each others existence, and thousands and millions perish beneath this yoke, in countries our best maps describe to us as unknown.

With great facility they can govern both this, and her sister kingdom; take due care of a German electorate, and give laws and government to the undefined regions of Canada. They can dispose of thirty millions of French, determine what government they shall

adopt, what principles they shall profess, and what religion they shall believe. They know perfectly well how the inhabitants of the immense continent of Africa ought to be disposed of, and can correct the error of the great author of nature, by transplanting them to those happy regions where they experience the inexpressible happiness of becoming his majesty's subjects, or rather the subjects of those persons to whom his majesty has, by his royal charters, been graciously pleased to transfer that dominion and authority, which he most rightfully possesses, over the black inhabitants of Africa, and their posterity for ever and ever.

With no less princely munificence, by another royal charter, more than half the remainder of the world and its inhabitants are conveyed to certain men, women, and children, of various nations, called the *honourable* the East-India Company: but, as these *honourable* ladies and gentlemen have been informed that there exists in this nation an *honourable* House of Commons, who have sometimes taken very great liberties, not only with royal grants, but with the royal grantors' themselves, they have thought it most prudent to have two strings to their bow, and have persuaded the *Right Honourable Henry Dundas* to inform the *honourable* House of Commons, that if they would confirm this royal munificent grant for twenty years, they would pay to the disposal of that *honourable* House ten millions, not of their own money, but part and parcel of that money which the said *honourable* gentlemen and ladies mean forcibly to take from the inhabitants of Asia.

This very *honourable* transaction, between these very *honourable* parties, may appear a little *odd* to those who are not acquainted with the perfection and excellence of the British government; they may think it a little extraordinary that a British house of commons should hold the purse not only of this nation, but the purses of the innumerable nations of Asia; and, possibly, this system of munificence may remind them of the generosity of Hudibras's saints

who could be,

Of gifts that cost them nothing, free.

Perhaps, it may be said, that royal gifts are usually distinguished by their magnitude and munificence, and that their splendor prevents an enquiry into their justice: but the munificence of George the Third far surpasses that of any of his compeers. It was never equalled by a king, nor scarcely exceeded by a pope. Alexander could bestow the kingdoms he had conquered amongst the generals who assisted him in the conquest; but, by this charter, there is bestowed to a parcel of men, women, and children, for the trifling groundrent of 500,000 per. annum, countries almost equalling both in riches and extent, the conquests of Alexander himself; in consequence of which, monarchs have been hurled from their thrones, whose magnificence and splendor so far surpasses that of European monarchs that, in comparison therewith, they can be deemed but of the swinish multitude.

After the extent of absurdity which we have witnessed, who shall pretend to define its limits? should the Aerostatic art be improved, may we not have the happiness to see his majesty's ministers range

the planetary system, dispose of the moon by a royal charter, catch Mercury in the budget, and share out the *Georgium Sidus* in Change Alley.

Most of those enormities which have disgraced the history of nations have been obscure in their origin, and have risen through an almost imperceptible gradation. Our horror is, in some degree, diminished by the veil of antiquity; and mankind are apt to imagine, that they are guilty only of a venial crime, when they continue to practice the mortal sins of their ancestors: but our domination over Asia cannot be viewed through any such palliating medium; though its features may have all the deformity of age, yet, like most of the fungus tribe, its growth has been as rapid, as its appearance is loathsome, and its effects noxious. When the duke of Hanover entered into the important compact with the glorious and immortal William, when he agreed to desert the cause of Lewis XIVth. in consideration of the electoral dignity, and the succession to the English crown, little did he think that the domains of the great Mogul was the splendour *appanage*. Even George II. would have stared to have been told that his next successor would grant the dominions of the great Mogul to a parcel of men, women, and children, natives and foreigners; and, notwithstanding the docility into which the honourable house of commons had been trained, under the fostering care of the illustrious house of Hanover, he would hardly have believed that, when Mr. Burke acknowledged that under this grant more than 20 millions had been destroyed; a bill, confirming such a charter, would pass with less ceremony than a canal or a divorce bill. It may be deemed extraordinary that, amongst all the loud clamourers who contended that the British parliament had no right to take the money of the Americans without their own consent, not one solitary individual should be found to ask by what authority British miscreants spread desolation and horror through a country, which, until it had the misfortune to be visited by the English, was stiled, with peculiar propriety, the paradise of nations! and on what principle we sanction these miscreants, returning with the rich harvest of their plunder, and receive them with open arms, on condition of their paying a tythe of it into the national treasury! as to Mr. Burke, vociferous as he was in favour of American rights, he certainly may be excused, he cannot be expected to defend and avow principles of justice and humanity, as he *honestly* owns that he hated *all principles* when he was young, and abhors them now his head grows grey; but it was rather too much to expect that this adroit master in ethics should so efficaciously and extensively inculcate his precious doctrines; it indicates that he has manifested great skill in selecting the soil in which to deposit the seed he has imported from the rich hot-bed of St. Omer's; in such a soil it seems to find a quick growth, and promises a rich harvest. All that escaped from our most precious patriots was, a faint doubt, an hesitating murmur, lest the rich plunder of the happiest regions of the earth should endanger the fabric of the British constitution, by increasing the influence of the crown. Oh! Marat, Oh! Robespierre ye now rise before me, almost the exemplars of perfect innocence. Wash not your hands from blood; sheath not your poniards; plunge, plunge them deep

in the hearts of your enemies; day by day add massacre to massacre; still shall I consider you as overflowing with the milk of human kindness, when I compare your deeds with the horrors which have overspread the plains of Indostan: *your* apologists may find something to say in your defence; *they*, at least, will not be necessitated to preserve a dead silence, nor to urge the horrors you have already perpetrated as the sole reason for their repetition. It cannot be said, that you have traversed oceans in search of resistless victims of slaughter. You may affirm that, robbery and murder is not your *sole* object, but merely a means to an end which you deem valuable; that in your shop of horrors you balance good and evil, and not compound solely deadly poisons, and spread nothing through the world but firebrands and death.

This claim to the *British* territories in *India*, and to those *valuable possessions*, which has now found a place in his majesty's speech, surely needed, on that account, some little preface, some trifling explanation on what this claim is founded. It would have been bestowing a favour on future historians, as I know not where they will find the records to prove the foundation of our claim; and it is rather unkind in us to leave future Vatel's and Puffendorf's destitute of all information on this subject, as they may be anxious to refer to the proceedings of the British government, in assuming the empire of Asia, as a memorable event illustrative of the law of nations.

But, as secret articles and private compacts frequently come to light in distant periods, so, it is possible, future historians may possess precious documents to which we are strangers, and the obscurities of the present period may be elucidated to them by the events. While we are supposing the present magnificent arrangement to be confined to Europe, we are necessarily involved in astonishment. For though the disgust with which the first gleams of liberty in France was viewed in this country be now avowed, yet is no motive visible to us which could have occasioned it. No man could have surmised a motive which could possibly have induced a mere king of *Great Britain* to wish the subversion of the limited monarchy of France; there does not appear a motive adequate to induce even the empress of Russia to exterminate the principles of liberty out of France, unless she has some hope of eradicating them from Britain also. But future historians may possibly know how far Asia may be comprehended in the views of this royal confederacy.

The mention his majesty makes, in this speech, of measures having been taken to secure the benefits we derive from these valuable possessions, ought to excite our warmest gratitude for his princely care. To secure so extraordinary a dominion, over such distant and extensive countries, might, indeed, call for the utmost exertions of his majesty's wisdom, as the history of the world proves, what his majesty has experienced, that distant dominion stands on a very slippery foundation. Indeed, till I read his majesty's most excellent speech, I never imagined that the exercise of any permanent and efficacious authority over the antipodes was pretended to be in view; I considered our Asiatic adventures merely as marauding expeditions, to gain a temporary possession of distant defenceless countries, which, after stripping and plundering, were to be abandoned in pursuit of

new sources of plundering. I had been taught by Mr. *Burke* to consider even "3000 miles of ocean as a powerful principle, in the natural constitution of things, for weakening government, and of which no contrivance could weaken the effect, that a power steps in which limits the arrogance of the raging passions, and says, hitherto shalt thou go and no farther. Who are you that you should fret and rage, and bite the chains of nature? Nothing worse happens to you, than does to all nations which have extensive empires: and it happens in all the forms into which empire can be thrown. In large bodies, the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk has not the same dominion in Algiers, as in Turkey. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. Spain, in her American Provinces, submits to this immutable condition, the eternal law of extensive and detached empire."

If weakness, disorder, disunion, and dissolution, be the general laws of extensive and detached empire, laws which result from the natural constitution of things, laws legible in every page of history, still more do these consequences result from the peculiar nature of our Asiatic territories.

☛ All those powerful and extensive dominations, which in various ages have astonished the world, have arisen from some great and adequate cause, some one single great and splendid power. In the *Roman* legions, *Alexander's* armies, and the irresistible bands of *Saladin*, we see causes adequate to the important effects produced; we see a great concentrated power spreading its domination, over countries which presented no barrier to the torrent. They manifest a strength well proportioned to their extent, and it is merely from the natural operation of time, in undermining that strength, the danger results; but in our Asiatic adventures, the causes which have produced such extensive and baneful effects, appear to have been of an accidental and transitory nature, as that which may occasion its overthrow; it is an empire not merely terminating, but commencing in weakness and disunion. No *Alexander*, *Cesar*, or *Saladin*, appears to our view. Mr. *Dundas* cannot unveil to us the conquerors of Hindostan: he is forced to amuse us with the unintelligible jargon of "The King, being the Sovereign; the Parliament the great superintending authority; and the company, the instrument through which that authority is to be administered." The source and nature of that power, which has produced these baneful effects, is thus unknown. It is involved in darkness. It works in obscurity. Such power, however well calculated for spreading desolation and ruin, is certainly very ill fitted for rearing a mighty empire. Rats and moles can undermine and destroy, but I never heard that they could rear or build.

The arrangement Mr. *Dundas* has made of this mighty power seems to be less clear, than that to which some think it bears the nearest resemblance; the Grand Signor, the Janissaries, and the Pacha. In this latter arrangement, the Sovereign, the great superintending authority, and the instrument of that authority, are very obvious; but in Mr. *Dundas's* the mighty instruments, who have governed, and are to govern, India, are perfectly unnoticed, though

they ought to have constituted the fourth, or rather the first, order in his classification. In a former speech, his majesty lamented, how inadequate this Instrument, the Company, was to the task of governing the *real* Instruments of authority in India; but, **now** it seems, those instruments in India are perfectly unnoticed, and men, women, and children, under the denomination of an honourable East India Company, are themselves become the Instruments. That such an heterogenous mass may possess sovereign dignity, I mean not to dispute, because, it is not easy to discover human beings more unfitting to exercise authority, than those in whom sovereignty is frequently placed, but then the real authority is usually exercised by *instruments*, and it was a discovery worthy of Mr. Dundas, that these men, women, and children, could possibly become the *instruments* of government themselves.

Should this speech of Mr. Dundas's as an ancient manuscript, fall into the hands of some Dr. Bentley he may venture a conjectural emendation: he may observe that as *tool* and *instrument* frequently have the same import, some blundering transcriber had substituted one term for the other, and their having in this passage a very different meaning, was a circumstance to which the transcriber had not adverted. He might observe that there was evidently an omission also in the manuscript, and that the instruments of this government had been omitted by latter transcribers, in consequence of the former error of the company being termed such: consequently that the true reading was, The King, the Sovereign; the Parliament, the superintending authority; the Company, the tool for conveniently conducting this government, and that the *real instruments* who conducted this government, were, owing to the careless of the transcribers, unfortunately omitted in the manuscript. He might support this criticism by observing, that though the sovereign or superintending authority, might not, yet, it was impossible, but that the *instruments* of government must be in the country governed: And, as the learned sometimes write in the vulgar tongue, he might exclaim, that he was astonished that any person who pretended to learning, could prove himself such a stupid dolt as to suppose, that, the inhabitants of a northern island not the most considerable in the world, an island which had but recently emerged from a state of barbarism, should dream of governing the most extensive and fertile countries in an opposite region of the earth. That to govern a people so opposite to themselves, in manners, and situation, was as task which even the most enlightened people would never have thought of; and that these European Islanders ever governed Asia was too extravagant to be imagined; that the manuscript in question could not possibly refer to any other than piratical adventures, to which Islanders were ever peculiarly prone as they naturally apply to maritime affairs. Secure from the aggressions of their neighbours; they have nothing to restrain them from violating the peace and happiness of others, but a sense of moral principle, or national honour, which rarely existed in that early stage of civilization to which these islanders had arrived. That the first and barbarous stages of society were associations, rather for the purposes of aggression than defence; the spirit of rapine long continuing, even

after some degree of civilization appeared in the world, and that this spirit of rapine was, in that stage of society, rendered most dangerous, by the strength it derived from the improvements and discoveries the people possessed beyond their more ignorant predecessors. They had not then learned that important truth, which peculiarly distinguishes the civilized from barbarous ages, that the value of the earth depends on its quiet enjoyment, and is destroyed by violence and outrage. Secure, by their situation, from all fear of retaliation, they occupied themselves in ranging the world to insult, and to plunder; and, having not attained any respect for government, as a mere civil institution, their Kings were tempted to encourage this system of rapine, considering very properly that it was the support of their power, as it had been its origin.

Such, he might say, was the state of these barbarous Islanders, in the eighteenth century; and, as the magnet had been then recently discovered, they might engage in extensive and piratical expeditions to Asia and Africa; which, being of more considerable importance than those of preceding pirates, they might dignify them with the terms *conquest, government, territories, and possessions*. They might make partial settlements on coasts, or temporary excursions into countries; they might, under fraudulent pretences, obtain admission into nations, and then, by intriguing with profligate natives, disturb peaceable governments; and might avail themselves of the disturbance they had excited to plunder and murder the inhabitants. He might observe that, as Asia had for many ages been in a state of civilization, it was peculiarly liable to the outrage of these northern Islanders; as a long and settled state of high civilization, by introducing peace, order, tranquillity, and the milder dispositions of the mind, equally qualified men to partake of the most perfect enjoyments of civil life, and unfitted them to defend that enjoyment from the outrages of more barbarous and savage nations. But still, he might say, that it was impossible that the extensive civilized countries of Asia could ever have been governed by any persons resident in a northern Island; their enterprises must either have been of a predatory nature, or, if any of them by intrigue, or artifice, had obtained any kind of establishment, they must have been absorbed amongst the natives, or become members of an Asiatic government.

Such may be the erroneous reasoning into which future ages may be misled, unless we transmit them some little intimation of the nature and origin of our claim to the government of Asia, and the means by which it is to be conducted. In these respects the speeches of Mr. Dundas and the King, or the King and Mr. Dundas, for I know not the proper order of precedency, appear to me to afford no light. The distinction of the *sovereign, controlling, and instrumental* authorities, to me, conveys no idea; and as little could I understand Mr. Fox's meaning of governing India by a strong government at home. I can easily understand making government strong at home, by governing India; which certainly is a subject worthy the violent contest it has occasioned: but still the affairs of India must be conducted by persons in India, and all the dispute must terminate in whom the appointment of these India sovereigns

shall be vested, whether in the *Ministers*, the *Parliament*, or the *Company*; or, whether it shall be shared amongst them all. But if government be, as Mr. *Burke* defines it, a contrivance of human wisdom, to supply human wants, let it be asked, whose wants are to be supplied by this contrivance of human wisdom? The wants of Asia will be very oddly supplied, by forcing them to send three millions per annum to England; and this treatment of India must certainly claim a very different epithet to that of government.

In an age, when the small glimmering of reason, which the art of printing had opened to us, is so universally reprobated; and Mr. *Burke* is so kindly leading us back to the ignorance of the 14th Century, I hope it will not be imagined that I object to any measures merely on the ground of their being hostile to *justice*, *humanity*, *reason*, *liberty*, *the rights of man*, or any other french principles. I only mean to ask why must our language be distorted, and involved in all the confusion of Babel? If it be deemed expedient to *murder* half the inhabitants of India, and *rob* the remainder, surely it is not requisite to call it *governing* them. If we choose to seize, and carry off the inhabitants of Africa, what is the use of terming it a *trade*? And if we convert our West India Islands into jails to confine them, why, in the name of common sense, must they be called *colonies*? But the confusion of language respecting India is still more curious; for, as nobody knows what is the government, or to whom it appertains, so it is not attempted to define what is its relation to this country. Mr. *Dundas* contents himself with saying that they are not *colonies*. His Majesty in his speech calls them *territories* and *possessions*; to whom do they belong? not to the people of England; for, strange to tell, they are the only people on the face of the earth who are forbid to *haunt*, or *visit* them. The Americans, when they composed a part of the British empire, were forbid to *haunt*, or *visit* them: but the moment they became independent they might resort to them without controul. An *Englishman* is forbid even to pass the Cape of Good-Hope. Is the King the Sovereign? so he is of Hanover: but it has not therefore any relation to this country. Are they the possessions of the India Company? who are the India Company? a non descript *assemblage*! many of whom are foreigners; all may be; it is not requisite there should be a score of Englishmen amongst them. The present proprietors may sell their shares to the national convention of France, and *Marat*, *Roberfpierre*, *T. Paine* and Co. may become the East India Company. But whether we trade with, or whether we plunder the Indies, the use of continuing such a company no one can imagine. But in this age of wonders, this is the very circumstance which Mr. *Dundas* presses on the house to recommend it to their notice. He says, "*The propositions he had to recommend were inconsistent with the opinions generally received. No political writer, as far as he knew, had recommended a mercantile company as the organ of government for a great country, and that, for reaping the full advantage of commercial intercourse, all the most esteemed writers had said a free trade was best.*" Lord Grenville follows the same line, still more clearly, in the House of Lords; and his short speech illustrates most forcibly the taste, and manners, of the present æra. He tells them, "*He should not enter into any detail on the subject of our India possessions,*

or any speculative discussion of the mode in which India ought to be governed. The ground he had to go on was a just and well founded experience, a guide which was at all times, perhaps, the best, but peculiarly so under such circumstances as existed at present." Well then, it might be supposed he would have shewn, from this experience, the consequences which have resulted from our government of India; by no means! his lordship very pithily tells them "*The present system has continued nine Years: therefore he could see no just reason why it should be altered. The present Bill, of course, assumed for its principle the continuance of the present system.*" Here, then, its passing *sub silentio* is accounted for: it is, it seems, a bill of course; it has existed nine years, ergo it is to exist twenty longer. The word *experience* is, it seems, condemned to change with the times, and, instead of meaning the deduction of wisdom, from a careful and deliberate investigation, of the great chain of past events, it now means only a continuance of a nine years system, without any investigation, or any discussion whatever. Nay, when the universal and unqualified condemnation of Dr. Smith, Dean Tucker, and every other author whose opinion is worth attending to, and who had professedly drawn their opinions from the deduction of experience, shall be urged even as a recommendation of the measure, under the idea that *philosophers and reasoners* are to be contemned.

All that is now deemed requisite in investigating a subject, is to shew that it is not contaminated with French principles; and on this strong ground the India Bill is brought forward, and indeed I do not hear that it has been accused of being the least tinged with *reason, justice, humanity, confraternity, liberty, equality, or rights of man*. But still, may it not be asked, If every thing that has existed is therefore to be continued, and its effects, and consequences, are not to be investigated under pain of being charged with introducing innovations; have not *Marat* and *Robespierre*, as much right to avail themselves of the doctrine, as Mr. Dundas and Lord Grenville? May it not be urged in the national assembly as well as in St. Stephen's chapel? If the proceedings of the one are to be open to the exaggerations of falsehood, shall the other claim an exemption even from the investigation of truth? If the murders, the desolation, or the confusion, which the measures of the one may have introduced, are to be censured, shall the others boast of them as a merit, and urge them as a plea for their continuance? on the contrary, if the proceedings of the one assembly, or the other, are to be judged of, it must be through the medium of our reason; and to this judicature they must both be subject, or both have equally a right to demur. In one respect both Lord Grenville and Mr. Dundas have certainly very carefully avoided French principles: for, while they talk of governing India, the effects of it on the people governed, or the benefits they are to derive from it, are intirely and properly unnoticed. That would, indeed, be wandering into the regions of vain theory. That is a subject on which an appeal to *reason*, or to *experience*, would be equally futile. All that is attempted is "*To remind Gentlemen of the advantages in possession, and which it must naturally be their first object to secure.*"

About eleven years since there was an extraordinary passage in his majesty's speech,—"The diligence and ardour with which you have

entered upon the consideration of the British interests in the East Indies, are worthy of your wisdom, justice, and humanity. To protect the persons, and fortunes, of millions in these distant regions, and to combine our prosperity with their happiness, are objects which will amply repay the utmost labour and exertion"--- To engage with diligence and ardour in protecting persons and property, in the distant regions of the earth, is a work which the term *Justice* almost degrades. I do not think that the mere call of *Justice* can compel us to abandon our Island and repair to *Africa*, *Africa*, or the *West Indies*, for such generous purposes. It ought to be classed among the heroic virtues. It is an offer of *confraternity* of the most stupendous nature; and, when we engage in it, will amply repay our utmost labour and exertion, as "the combining our prosperity with their happiness," is a task which, when we effect it, will illustrate our wisdom.

But there seems to be a great dissonance in the speeches of 1782 and 1793, though probably it may be not worth noticing; for, however unity of place may be most rigorously adhered to in this species of composition, yet unity of design may not be deemed so essential. A great change in our phraseology has since 1782 taken place. Mr. Dundas's plan is far more intelligible; it seems to consist merely in sending some persons to India, to bring away three millions *per annum*, or as much more as they can possibly procure; and in dividing this (shall I call it plunder) among the various expectants? seems to consist the whole difficulty of the plan. But he does not pretend to talk about *Justice*, *Wisdom*, *Humanity*, *Protection*, *Prosperity*, and *Happiness*; they now smell too strongly of French principles to be admitted as the ornaments of a speech; they are not deemed requisite even as the paper and packthread, to tie up the parliamentary manufacture.

When Mr. Dundas tritely states that the country governed had advanced in prosperity, he must be supposed to mean that the country had been prosperous for those who governed it, for surely he cannot mean to insinuate that any part of India has advanced in prosperity since it has been seized by us, because there exists too evident proof to the contrary. If it be true, let the important fact be clearly and explicitly stated; that, indeed, would be an appeal to experience, and bringing the dispute to a fair issue. Strong and clear is the evidence of the happiness of Asia at various periods, and under various governments. It was not materially affected though conquered by the Mahometans. The harshest despotism they have ever experienced is mild and beneficent, compared with what they have undergone since under the domination of Englishmen. Mr. Dundas says "Lord Clive, the great founder of our territorial power, was greater in the arrangements he made for peace than even in the victory of *Plaissey*." Arrangements great indeed! The moment we possessed the sovereignty the whole property of the land was seized on, every proprietor dispossessed, and the whole nation put up to auction to the best bidder by the English. Not content with the whole possession of the country, it was contrived, at one stroke, to drain it of all its specie, by monopolizing its principle articles of consumption. These were dealt out to the people till all their effects were extorted; when these failed, the land became spread with the dying

bodies of the inhabitants, and twice the number of inhabitants of Great Britain fell by pestilence and famine, a sacrifice to these great arrangements, which were made by five members of the British legislature. But the calamities of India terminated not with extorting the whole property of the inhabitants, for the taxes were increased and exacted when the means of paying them had ceased. The manufacturers even cut off their thumbs, that they might not be compelled to work without hire, to supply the company's investments.

But probably Mr. Dundas, by advanced prosperity, means only diminished horror, and that the plains of Bengal have never since produced such a rich harvest of death.—Granted.—To destroy twenty million *per annum* of the inhabitants of a country containing fifty, was a *ratio* of desolation that must necessarily decrease. The continuance of a violent disease destroys the violence of its symptoms. The vital stream which, flows rapidly when first opened, must naturally decrease, till it only falls in drops from the expiring victim. I will grant that it is possible that measures less violent may have been since adopted, because their continuance would have defeated their object. The richest country in the world, without inhabitants, without circulation, and without some degree of security, would become as worthless to the possessors as the Lybian sands. But indeed, Mr. Dundas, to do him justice, considers the happiness or misery of Asia, as so perfectly beneath consideration in this affair, that he owns he should persist in his present plan, "*Even though the administration of the company were still attended with all the abuses that had been formerly charged upon it, and that he should have preferred enduring these abuses, if they admitted no other remedy.*" Indeed, the merit of this heroic fortitude with which Mr. Dundas could endure the calamities of India, when placed in opposition to any advantages resulting to this country, may possibly admit of some abatement when we recollect, that it does not appear, to require any prodigious portion of *stoicism*, for a man in St. Stephen's chapel to endure the calamities of fifty millions of people in a distant regions of the earth, especially if he should happen to derive revenue and patronage from their miseries. Indeed, this great philosopher can endure with equal fortitude all the calamities which we spread over Africa and the West Indies, as well as those of France.

But I must now beg pardon of my readers for attempting to ridicule or reprobate our pretences to govern India, as it is done by Mr. Dundas himself, with a point and force which I will not pretend to equal. When he talked of "*the advantages we derived from the present system,*" when he "*reminded the house of the advantages actually in possession,*" his address was serious and solemn, becoming the importance of the subject. He considered it as *interesting their feelings*, and concluded very properly, and very emphatically, "*That those advantages it would naturally be their FIRST object to secure.*" Having drawn their attention to this important point, he, with great earnestness, labours there to confine it, anxiously cautions them against being drawn aside to any other enquiry, than the important one, the advantages we derived from the present system; all beyond he treated as vain speculation; and the ridiculous idea of our governing India,

rushes so forcibly on his mind, that the grave, elaborate, sententious statesman, becomes instantly metamorphosed into a perfect *Rabelais*, and he entertains the house with the following amusing and instructive fact, “soon after the acquisition of the dewanee (that is our assuming the government of India) a new set of gentlemen were sent out to superintend the government, and the court of judicature was established. By these gentlemen, as well as by the old servants of the company in India, many able reports were sent home; and the noble lord, then at the head of administration, submitted them to the consideration of ingenious men, in order to form a digest for the government of Bengal, the administration of justice, the mode of letting land, &c. On no one of the points submitted to them could any two of these able men agree.”

Had not common sense, common justice, and common humanity, been stigmatized as *French principles*, surely the deduction from this fact was plain and obvious. I mean not to dispute that prodigious anxiety his majesty feels “to protect the persons and fortunes of millions in distant (as well as neighbouring) regions;” but when his majesty’s wisdom, and the wisdom of his ministers, assisted by the wisdom of all the experienced servants of the company, and of that noble lord who, Mr. Dundas tells us, was greater for the arrangements he made for the government of the country, than even in founding our territorial power; nay, when all this wisdom, with the experience and wisdom of the set of gentlemen who were sent out by the wisdom of government, for the express purpose of investigating and superintending, on the spot, the government and jurisprudence of the country; and when this bundle of wisdom was combined with the wisdom of all the ingenious men at home, to whom the importation of wisdom from the east was submitted; I do think, that when this climax of wisdom appeared to be so inadequate to the task, as that no two of them could agree on the subject, his majesty might, consistently with the sublimest ideas of justice and humanity, have declined the task of “protecting the persons of millions in distant regions.” I would submit it to the bench of bishops, whether it could have been deemed criminal in his majesty, under such circumstances, to have left the inhabitants of distant regions to their fate; nay, I would submit it as a case of conscience, to our new friend the pope, whether it would have been any more than a venial sin, to have left *Hyder Ally* and *Tippoo Saib* the undisturbed possession of the Mysore; at least till there existed more clear and decisive evidence, than I have ever yet met with, of the advantage the persons and property of the inhabitants of distant regions, derive from being taken under the protection of his majesty’s Christian scepter.

Possibly I may entertain erroneous ideas on this subject, owing to unfortunately having never met with any document, ancient, or modern, that proves the necessity of his majesty’s taking the persons and property of millions in distant regions under his protection, or the benefits they have derived from it: though my information has been derived from Europeans, and not immediately from the natives themselves. Even in the reports of the committee of the House of Commons, I find painted, in the strongest colours, the iniquity of every measure respecting our pretended government of India. “The great arrangements of lord Clive, the great founder of our territorial pow-

er," I find described in these reports, as being of the blackest dye. I find charges of rapacity, treachery, and cruelty. Such was the origin of our power in Bengal. In another report, conducted under the auspices of Mr. Dundas, the origin of our quarrel with *Hyder Ally*, which has now terminated, in stripping his son of a great part of his dominions, is very clearly traced; our conduct is portrayed as wicked in the extreme, and that of *Hyder's* as magnanimous, just, wise and prudent; nor does the unfortunate termination of the war derogate at all from the qualities of his successor. Let Europe, (I mean the continent) if it can, produce an equal to either of them. The happiness of his dominions, nay even of the Canare, a conquered country, is as strongly contrasted with the misery and desolation of the English domination, as the love and attachment which the inhabitants, even of the countries he had conquered, bore to *Hyder* and his successor, are contrasted with the horror and detestation with which the English are viewed in Asia. This detestation, which every fact, and every testimony, proves, is transmuted by Mr. Dundas into the reverence the natives have for the *Europeans*, and which, he says, extends to their very dogs, this reverence he cautions us carefully to preserve, and their seems to be little danger of our disregarding his admonition.

Forcibly to take three millions *per annum* from any people, and carry it to a distant country, will certainly secure this kind of reverence from any nation on earth, because it will insure their misery. Whether the persons sent from England to conduct this business, which we choose to call government, are sent by the King, or the company, by Mr. Dundas, or by Jack Ketch, by a board of control, or by parliamentary commissioners, is perfectly indifferent to the people of Asia; nor, indeed, are the various shades of cruelty which may be discriminated in conducting the process of extracting the property of Asia for the emolument of England, a matter of any more importance, than whether an English corsaire shall murder 9 or 10 in the hundred of his cargo; whether the survivors shall be burned with an iron or a silver brand; or be starved, on an allowance of 10 or 12 pints of horse-beans *per week*. The mere drawing three millions *per annum* from her, that insure misery to Asia, and clearly as Mr. Dundas has described the insatiable gulph into which the riches of Asia is to be poured, he has as carefully avoided any inquiry into the amplitude of the source.

Instead of amusing us with ideas of the immense annual income to be drawn from Asia, and instead of idle discussions as to remote arrangements of its disposition in England, there was a line of argument he might have taken, in which he might have proceeded on sure ground. Had he made an enquiry into the circulating or hoarded treasures of those countries of which he had the possession; that treasure he might certainly reckon on as our own, and we might take such measures as to our wisdom might seem expedient, for transporting it to this country; but there our depredations must necessarily terminate, for, as the circulating medium is withdrawn from the country, the real riches, the industry of the inhabitants, and the riches of its soil, become inutile. The people must abandon it, or fall a sacrifice to pestilence and famine. The land we

may then abandon to tygers and serpents, our revenue must cease; and we have no resource, but to seek out fresh sources of plunder in new conquests.

That a large permanent revenue can ever be drawn from India is impossible, even admitting every precaution be adopted; let us suppose that the antient taxes of Bengal had been adhered to, instead of being quadrupled; admitting no monopolies had been formed; that property had been secured; that the persons whom we sent to India had clear heads and clean hands; in short, let us suppose our conduct respecting India to be exactly the reverse to what it has been, and that we merely confine ourselves to remitting to Europe, that antient, moderate, revenue, which had ever been levied by the native princes. It might then be said, has not the country ever flourished under these taxes, these laws, and these regulations? true—and still would it have flourished, because the assessments levied by the sovereigns again returned among the people, and constituted the circulating medium of the country; but you have withdrawn it never to return. No analogy can be drawn between the effects of levies returned into the circulation of a country, and when withdrawn from it. For instance, let us suppose the empress of Russia should take a fancy to eradicate French principles from this island, and should take possession of it for that purpose, and some Russian Mr. Dundas should open a British budget at *St. Petersburg*: but stay, I will not suppose him a Mr. Dundas; because I will not suppose, what I cannot believe, that her imperial majesty of all the Russias will treat us, or any other people, as we treat those over whom we exercise dominion, or as we have treated our sister kingdom. I will not suppose that she will grant a charter to authorise some, and prohibit all the rest of her subjects from trading to the richest and most considerable nations of the earth;—that when these wretches, under her authority, shall have been treated kindly, and enjoyed great advantages and privileges, from the mildness and beneficence of the sovereigns, they should fortify their factories, and garrison them with troops from Russia;—that, when these fortifications, and their hostile aspect, should at length give umbrage to the sovereigns of the country, and they should forbid them to increase their fortifications, or military enterprises, those very measures and precautions, which the duty the sovereigns of the countries owed their subjects, should be deemed a sufficient plea for attempting to usurp the dominion; that destitute of force to effect this purpose, they should resort to the most villainous artifices, intriguing with the servants to betray the sovereign, and weakening the government by repeated scenes of revolt, should at length usurp it to themselves, dissolving not merely all the bonds of government, but all the property in the land, and range the country till it was one scene of desolation, covered with the dead bodies of the inhabitants; that she should suffer this series of outrage, yet make such a despicable mockery of justice, as to range for a division of the spoil, while she pretended to censure a few particular facts, in this assemblage of crimes, from whence was derived the plunder at which she was grasping. That she should dress out a court of justice, with all the trippery of a theatre, to squeeze returning pachas, and dispence

an heterogenous mixture of censure and honour for the same species of crime; and then, to conclude the scene, that it should be considered amongst her ministers as a very good joke, that no two persons could agree in the means of restoring some species of order and government into the chaotic desolation they had occasioned, and that this should be alledged as a reason for selling them to jews and jobbers for 500,000 *per annum*. I say, I will not suppose she will ever be thus guilty, because I believe some sense of honour, some dignified pride, generally accompanies the possession of *supreme unlimited* authority, and that the lowest degradation of the human character will ever be found, where power is divided and contested, like the Grand Seigneur overawed by his Janissaries, or a Monarch controlled by popular assemblies, or other kinds of mixed or confused governments. I will then suppose that she treats us with that species of dignified oppression which becomes a great sovereign; that she suffers us to retain our laws and our customs; preserves all the foundations of property, nay, remits us half our customary taxes, either to pay the nation's creditors, or to be disposed of by Mr. *Payne* in national bounties, and requires only half our usual taxes to be remitted to Russia. Here is a plan, *mild and beneficent*, when compared to Mr. *Dundas's*; now will Mr. *Jenkinson*, before he begins his operations upon India, ask his father how many years, he apprehends, the *great*, the *rich*, the *inexhaustible* England could bear this drain.

When Mr. *Dundas* contends that a plan is warranted by *experience*, against which the experience of every age and nation militates, he pours sovereign contempt on his audience. He presumes they are ignorant of the history of this, and of every other country; or he would not have dared to assert that a distant dependent dominion is permanent or valuable. The Portuguese have preceded us in our enterprize; can she bear witness—will Spain bear testimony to the value of a colony, which though yielding an inexhaustible revenue, yet is it a source of misery and weakness to the parent state. Mr. *Dundas* well knows that experience will warrant no intercourse between nations, but the intercourse of fair and legitimate commerce; *experience* testifies that all other is ruinous as it is wicked; yet he seems to treat with contempt the idea of increasing our exports to India, and boldly tells us, not to risk the solid advantages we possess, in pursuit of commercial speculations; ridicules the idea of finding customers for our *principal manufactures* in that half of the world between the *Cape of Good Hope* and *Cape Horn*, though the records of parliament prove the eagerness with which the trade was pursued, even in times far less qualified for such enterprizes than the present. He knows that private adventurers offered to *treble* the exports of the company, and to supply government with saltpetre much under the company's price. He knows that India presents such a source of commercial enterprize, that all our severe laws cannot prevent English capitals being employed, in foreign bottoms, to a much greater extent than the whole commerce of the company; yet he has the boldness to say that the hopes, formed of the *limited experiment he has introduced into his plan*, will fail; which indeed may probably be the case, as himself and the company have, certainly,

sufficient *power* in India to *secure* a miscarriage. Thus contrary to all *experience* is this plan formed, though on the very ground of experience he pretends to recommend it.

Contemptibly as Mr. Dundas may treat our *India* Commerce, and all attempts at increasing it, when compared with the *solid* and *important* advantages we now derive from *India*; he yet thinks it worth while to dress it out with some pomp, and, strange to tell, he even boasts of the company employing 81,000 tons of shipping. Surely it was unnecessary to remind us of the company hiring twice the quantity of shipping that was necessary, paying twice the value, and breaking up the ships without wearing them out that new ones might be built; but why did he not inform the House, that, *these 81,000 tons of shipping had been employed in defiance of an act of the legislature, passed at the very time when Mr. Dundas himself held an high office in the navy department, that the act states this very fact which Mr. Dundas brings forward with applause to his ignorant auditors, to be "an unnecessary consumption of Oak Timber fit for the royal navy."* Mr. Dundas then tells us of the immense imports of the company, and trembles lest a concern of such magnitude should be deranged by *innovation*. I suppose he must mean, that is, if he has any meaning, that we should leave off drinking tea, or at least that we should have no tea to drink, if it were not for an *Honourable East India Company*; but really if this evil were certain, I cannot see it to be so very terrific: nay, should the ladies throw away their shawls and the gentlemen their wangees, I do not think it would quite ruin poor old *England*, even though the duties on them amount to a million *per annum*. At length he comes a little more to the point, and tells us, this commerce is a vent for English manufactures to the value of a *million per annum*. That those who are just come from counting the rollos at a gaming table, or casting up their private accounts, and have no ideas beyond them, should stare at being told of a whole *million* of money is probable, but they ought to have been told, that, *the exclusive trade of the company comprises that of almost half the globe, including the richest and most populous countries; that yet this MILLION is not near a tythe of our exports, that does not equal even that to Holland or Germany: and they ought to have recollected the contempt with which the sale of our manufactures to France, to the amount of a MILLION, was lately treated, when it was brought in competition with the inexpressible pleasure of cutting the throats of its inhabitants.*

Admitting that we subdue all the native princes of India, admitting that Lord Macartney may enable us to usurp the dominion of China, that the Empress of Russia guarantees them, and that all the powers in Europe and *America* suffer their commerce to lie at the mercy of our India Company, yet still will the security of our India possessions insure the loss of them to this country. The English in India will then no longer remit three millions per annum. No acknowledgement can be then expected from them beyond a *burse*, or a *state-bed*, or a present to the *India* Minister.

FINIS.

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A Defence of the War against FRANCE.

IN viewing the opposite opinions of mankind, it will generally be found, that those variances usually result from the difference of the original principles we adopt, or on which we act, rather than from any error in the deductions from those principles. In contemplating the wonderful adventures in which, for a Century past, we have been engaged, some are apt to suspect an universal derangement of intellect, considering our island as one vast hospital of incurable lunatics. And, perhaps, appearances might warrant the conclusion. But, I believe, on investigation it will be found, that suppositions so derogatory to our national character can result only from the ignorance of the principles on which we act. Let those principles be assumed, and the whole of our conduct respecting Africa, the West Indies, the East Indies, and France, will present to our view a wonderful uniformity.

To the honour of the nation it may be recorded, that, perhaps, no measure was ever adopted with a more universal approbation than the war against France. Indeed, it would have been strange if it had not. It naturally resulted from principles so strongly and universally inculcated; as to become almost as if they had been innate. A hatred of the French we all imbibed in our earliest infancy. Every source of our ideas was impregnated with the laudable principle. It was the only subject on which all parties, all religions, all classes amongst us, agreed. To be an Englishman was to be an Antigallican. The Whig *Dr. Price*, taught us from the pulpit, that "the French were our natural enemies;" and the Tory *Dr. Johnson*, with an accuracy becoming his character, asks "What can you expect from a people that eat frogs?" All our writers tell us how despicable and superficial are their authors, and every cobbler can inform us, that one Englishman is as good as three Frenchmen.

These just and accurate sentiments very fortunately combining with recent events, it needed not the eloquence of *Mr. Burke* to excite a universal wish for the extirpation of a people equally the objects of our hatred and contempt. The despicable wretches dared to wish for freedom. Impudent presumption! Slavery and wooden shoes were their just portion! It became them to have known that Liberty was the *Englishman's* birth-right, and a song would have informed them, that it was *Britons* who "never would be Slaves." But the monsters had the profligate wickedness to put their King to death, for the trifling offences of conspiring with foreign powers against his country, and ordering his guards to fire on and massacre ten thousand of his unarmed subjects! This was, undoubtedly, a gross insult on the British nation. She had hitherto stood solely and peculiarly distinguished for bringing a Monarch to the scaffold, proscribing his successor, and pronouncing a sentence of bastardy on———Here then the French daringly insulted us, by presuming, in some degree, to imitate our deeds; and, with matchless impudence, ventured to purloin a small portion of our crimes.

However properly, and however universally, the desire of extirpating these monsters might prevail amongst us, yet the fact, however disgraceful, is too notorious to be concealed, that there were some amongst us who were so lost to those sentiments becoming Englishmen, as to be averse to starving, or extirpating, the French; nay, they even scrupled not to express their wish that they should be left undisturbed in the possession of the liberty they had obtained. It is true, indeed, that the number of these despicable wretches was very inconsiderable, and they were looked on with becoming contempt; by those amongst us who possessed elevated minds, becoming the people of a great nation. And, I trust I shall not be deemed censorious, when I declare that I do not believe that there was a single individual amongst us who was averse to the war against

France, but might justly be deemed an enemy to our excellent constitution in Church and State, because I know of no principle on which the war against France can be reprobated, but will equally apply to the whole system of our conduct.'

Political leaders labour under disadvantages peculiar to their situation. On all but political subjects the disputants are at full liberty to bring forward their whole store of arguments: Statesmen, on the contrary, are in, general, necessitated to conceal their true motives; and, when called on for explanations and defence, it is only fictitious ones, adapted to temporary purposes, which we have any reason to expect. The true motives and reasons always lie hidden deep in the recesses of the cabinet; and they may be solid and consistent, however weak, puerile, and inconsistent, those may be with which they are necessitated to fill their speeches, their declarations, and their memorials. Is it any impeachment of the understandings of the great characters who adorn the Treasury bench in St. Stephen's Chapel, for them to tell their audience that misery, anarchy, and ruin, have overspread the unhappy country of France, that there is no such thing as property existing, and that, unless we restore the Clergy, and Nobles, to their ancient rights, the land and property of England will become of no value? Is it derogatory to the splendid abilities of *Lord Hawkebury*, for him to order his son to tell the House of Commons, that it is both practicable, and indispensibly necessary, for us to march to Paris, and destroy the Jacobin Club? No! These men despise the nonsense they deem it expedient to adopt, and all that it proves is—the ideas they entertain of the audience they thus address: as the Clergy deem it no disgrace to submit to all the mummery of a religion they despise, for the valuable end of preserving the authority and dignity of their order.

Hence, in defending the war against France, I am not, by any means, bound to adopt any of those motives or arguments, which have in the course of it

been thrown out to amuse the ignorant, and which have regularly been disclaimed, as soon as they have effected the temporary purpose for which they were intended. No longer is it requisite to suppose our Ministers to have been so frantic as to plunge us in a war, because we were permitted to send our manufactures up the Scheldt, for however loudly it might have been vociferated, and however strongly insisted on as the ostensible and justifiable ground of war, we are now told, in the sublime and beautiful language of *Mr. Burke*, that it was as despicable as a dispute about a *piss-pot*. And we now consider the death of the King of France merely as a fortunate circumstance, which happily produced a more perfect zeal and unanimity amongst us in prosecuting a war which had been long ardently sought for, from motives which would have been equally powerful though *Louis XVI.* never had existed. It is now avowed, that the real motives for our war against France, originated in the French presuming to change their former government. "*The sincerity of our wishes for the success of so difficult and so interesting an undertaking,*" is no longer alledged. We treat with contempt every distinction relating to the different parties, and events, which have taken place. The cause of the war, the danger to this country, existed "*from the first period, when his most Christian Majesty had called his people around him, to join in concerting measures for their common happiness.*" The apparent neutrality, which for four years we observed, is now considered with regret; and *Mr. Dundas* takes shame to himself and his colleagues, that they were not so quick sighted as *Mr. Burke*, in perceiving the danger, which resulted to this country, from the first dawn of freedom in France. It is now deemed expedient to apologize to that illustrious Senator, for any timidity (not reluctance) which may have appeared in adopting his early, and earnest, advice—of *extermination, or eternal War.*

As the obscurity, in which it has been deemed expedient to involve this subject, has in some degree

been done away ; as the view, in which I ever considered it, begins to be unveiled to the public, I have presumed to present myself as a champion in its defence. And I mean to contend, That it is highly becoming this nation, to exert all the energy of the state, to prevent France, Poland, or any other considerable nation in Europe, from adopting any alteration in their Government, or Laws, which may meliorate and improve the circumstances of the people, or remove those defects in their Governments, which impede their Manufactures, Trade, Agriculture, and General Happiness—That on our preventing the removal of those defects in their Governments, and our subverting their rising happiness, depends the very existence of every thing which peculiarly distinguishes us amongst Nations.—That it becomes us to persevere, with a zeal proportioned to the importance of the cause, assured that in abandoning it we expose our religion, the administration of our laws, the great system of our commerce, nay our well balanced government, the wonder and the admiration of the world ! to certain and irreparable ruin. So far from wanting success, I mean to contend that we have been eminently successful in our design, if not equal to our wishes, yet fully adequate to any reasonable expectation we could have formed.—That our success, so far from furnishing a motive for peace, ought only to incite us to a farther prosecution of the war ; as whether successful, or unsuccessful, it never can be abandoned, without abandoning every thing which is the pride and boast of Englishmen.

But, previous to the discussion of these propositions, I must beg leave to submit a preliminary one of the first importance, that is, what shadow of right have we to discuss them at all ? The right of making war the wisdom of our ancestors has lodged solely in the crown ; and is it not to be inferred that the crown is the sole and proper judge, and that every subject, in presuming to judge of it, and, in consequence of such judgment, attempting to control,

impede, or in any shape prevent, the crown engaging in, or prosecuting any war, is guilty of an attempt against the prerogatives of his majesty? and, if treason be not limited to attempts against the person of the sovereign, but extends to the regal rights, it follows, that to arraign those rights, or attempt to incite the people to impede the sovereign in the free and undisturbed exercise of those rights, must be far more indisputably treason, than any attempt against the novel and undefined right of an assembly called a House of Commons. No true friend to the principles of our glorious Revolution can wish to entrench on this prerogative. It was particularly secured to the crown by the Bill of Rights. The prerogative of leading us to slaughter, seems, according to Bishop Burnet, to have been the principal motive that induced our *glorious Deliverer* to rescue us from Popery, Slavery, and Wooden Shoes; for it seems that on our proving somewhat restive, he was with difficulty persuaded from abandoning us to the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender. Indeed the vesting this prerogative intirely, and unrestrained, in the Monarch became peculiarly proper, when a Sovereign with foreign possessions was placed on the throne. The particular interest of those foreign possessions might call for a war injurious to this country, and ought not the Prince to be left to his free uncontrolled choice? would it not be a violation of the first principles of justice, were we to expect him to attend to *our* sentiments on the subject, who must necessarily be liable to be biassed by our particular interest? His present Majesty is the common Father of all his subjects, Hanoverian, and English, Protestants, Irish Catholics, Mungrel Canadians, African Negroes, Mussulmen, Gentoos, and the people of the South Sea Islands, which Captain Cook took possession of in his Majesty's name; and shall we, from among this motley group, expect to have our opinions attended to, merely because his Majesty does us the honour of residing amongst us in preference to his other dominions?—It is indeed

alleged that the prerogative of making war is but nominally in the Crown, as the House of Commons possess the means which are requisite to conduct it. This might, possibly, have been the case formerly, as we find a Parliament desiring *Charles I.* to declare war, and then laughing at him, and refusing to furnish money to carry it on. But this was too great a solecism to be suffered to continue at the Revolution. From that period the Crown has possessed all the means of war, a regular military force, enlisted for life, sworn to submit to articles of war framed by the Crown. On declaring war, the English troops may be sent abroad, and foreign introduced in their room to preserve order, and to pay these troops the whole surplus revenue, amounting to several millions, is at the disposal of the crown; besides raising money by Tallies, Debentures, Navy Bills to any extent, which the government ever since the revolution have regularly practiced. When *Mr. Pitt* came into power he found twenty millions of unfunded debt, raised without any authority of Parliament whatever; and this very sessions a bill has been passed binding Parliament to discharge Navy Bills, although issued without their previous authority. But were we to admit *Mr. Wyndham's* doctrine, that the Royal prerogatives are to be exercised under the sanction of the House of Commons, supposing this right of making war to be banded about between the Council Chamber and St. Stephen's Chapel, or suppose it to be divided between them, yet still it may be asked, what right can the people have to interfere? whether power shifts from the Barons and Clergy to the Monarch, or from the Monarch to the lower House of Parliament, yet no portion of it ever devolved upon the people; and it approximates to Treason to contend that it ever ought. What impertinence then must it be, for any individual to interfere in any part of the government of a country, as to which the whole body of them have not the least concern. The glorious Queen Elizabeth, and Solomon her successor, very properly, therefore,

checked this presumption, by telling us that it did not become subjects to take upon them to judge of affairs of State, or presume to talk of what Sovereigns might do in the plenitude of their power.

As this war is so completely defensible on Aristocratic, it is no less so on Democratic principles. Let us suppose Citizens RICHMOND and PAINE ransacked all the Gin-shops to form a National Convention, can it be doubted, but that a proposal for extirpating the French would be clamourously adopted; and if there be any meaning in these Whig principles, it must be, that the minority are bound to concur in, and support, the resolutions of the majority, how profligate soever they may be, and even though they may possess the means of preventing the profligate measures of the majority being carried into effect. Hence, were the war ever so absurd, and indefensible in itself, yet can no Tory object to it, as it evidently flowed from Royalty, the proper source of war; nor can any Whig object to it, as it has been sanctioned by the majority of the people, and if *Vox Populi Vox Dei* be true, and I never heard its truth denied, it then also follows, that this war has in a peculiar manner received still superior sanction to that either of the King or the people.

Having fully proved the rightful origin of this war, on principles which all parties amongst us must admit, I might here lay down my pen with triumph; and I must insist that proceeding a single step further in my argument, must be considered as being perfectly *ex Gratia*. Nay, I must acknowledge, that I scarcely know how to apologize for the daring presumption of discussing the merits of a question, which the constitution has wisely assigned to be solely judged of by one individual, doubtless on the principle that he alone is the fit proper and competent judge of it. I even doubt whether even a zealous defence may not be a crime. If the purity of my intentions be pleadable in my defence, more than *Gulliver's* was, when, with an ignominious stream,

he extinguished the flames which threatened destruction to the superb palace of the illustrious Emperor of Lilliput, it can only be owing to the superior mildness of our laws, and the peculiar tenderness with which they are, at the present period, administered. Some have pretended to dispute the right of our interfering in the internal affairs of France, but *Mr. Pitt* very truly tell us, that it is a practice justified by the greatest writers, and by the conduct of the best of Princes, in the best of times. Indeed, the authorities are so numerous that I am puzzled to select them. The celebrated *Grotius* is clear on the subject. Did not (says he) *Hercules* go about the world to destroy Monsters?" and he might have added so did *Don Quixote*. If then, *Hercules*, the Demi-God, went about the world to destroy Monsters, surely the Kings of Europe, who are deemed Gods Vicegerents on Earth, have a right to destroy the Jacobin Monsters at Paris. But, certainly, no friend to our glorious Revolution can object to the interference of one country with the internal concerns of another. Did not the *immortal* William come over with 16,000 Dutch troops to interfere in our internal concerns? Did he not go over to Ireland, and interfere with her concerns? Did he not interfere with the internal affairs of Germany, and procure a ninth Electorate to be created, but which for him would never have been thought of? and did he not plot the partition and disposition of the whole Spanish Monarchy? Did not that great Prince George I. send a fleet to Sweden, and Russia, and compel them to sign the quadruple Alliance? and does not his present Majesty interfere with the internal affairs of Indostan, and of Africa? All these instances relate, merely to the right of interfering in the affairs of countries with whom you are at peace, solely on the ground that it is your interest to interfere: but with respect to France we are in a state of war. Some ignorantly suppose, that even a state of war only authorises a reparation of the injury for which the war was commenced, but *Mr. Pitt* very properly asks us,

whether in any war we ever regarded the cause of quarrel as the ground of peace? The right of war clearly includes a right of adopting every measure which interest, which ambition, or which cruelty, can suggest. *Mr. Burke* very justly observes, that no Tyrant, no savage Conqueror, ever filled up the measure of cruelty which every writer on the Law of Nations has allowed them. Certainly not. Let us, for instance, examine the mild Whig philosopher *Mr. Locke*. He defines a state of war to be "*a state of enmity and destruction*;" that it is "*a state of enmity, malice, violence, and mutual destruction*," and says he, you may treat your enemies "*as a beast of prey*;" That we had a just cause of war against France even *Mr. Fox* admits, and *Mr. Locke* then grants that you may treat them as beasts of prey, you may treat them with enmity and malice. Every thing short of extermination and destruction is kindness, favour, and abandonment of your just right. It is absurd for *Mr. Fox* to say, that we *had* a just ground of war, but the ground done away we now pursue it on unjustifiable principles, or for a criminal purpose. This is impossible, for, once commenced, it is according to *Mr. Locke*, to be pursued and conducted with *malice, violence, and destruction*; for he defines such to be its very nature. It is certainly something extraordinary, that any should venture to promulgate a single scruple as to the lawfulness of extirpating our natural enemies, the French. It is too fatal a proof of the prevalence of French principles amongst us. Why are we so fastidious on a sudden? are we startled at the idea of extermination? has not the extermination of the *Rohillas*, after full investigation, been sanctioned by the British Parliament? and have not more fell in the East Indies, during his present Majesty's reign, than is proposed to be massacred in France? Nay, have not more millions been exterminated from Africa than the whole population of France amounts to? Yet both the people of Africa and Indostan were so far

from being our natural enemies, that the most frantic imagination could not suggest the idea. But if the French partizans insist on our treating them with greater tenderness than we have Africa or Indostan, will it be pretended that they are intitled to better treatment than our sister Kingdom, Ireland? Under the glorious Queen Elizabeth, the Poet Spenser proposes, "That a Proclamation be made for the Irish to submit themselves in twenty days. If they did not come in on this first summons, I would have none received, but left to their miserable end, being kept from manurance, by hard restraint, they would quickly consume themselves and devour one another." He states the proceedings in Munster, as an example, "Notwithstanding that the same was a most rich and plentiful country, full of corn and cattle, yet, ere one year and a half, they were brought to such wretchedness as that out of every corner of the woods and glens they came forth creeping on their hands, for their legs would not bear them; they looked like anatomies of death, they spoke like ghosts, crying out of their graves, they did eat the dead carrions, happy were they could find them, yea, and one another soon after, insomuch as the very carcases they spared not to scrape out of their graves—in a short space there were none almost left and a most populous and plentiful country suddenly left void of man and beast." Comparing these laudable proceedings with our recent transactions in Bengal will prove the uniformity of our national character, and surely remove any squeamish scruples as to the vigorous measures which it may be expedient for us to pursue respecting France. When we talk of exterminating the people of that unhappy country, some are apt to ask, whether we can spare hands to cut all their throats? for taking the population at twenty seven millions, and supposing we kill a thousand a day, it will take 86 years and 3 months to destroy them; unless, as it is a work of necessity, the Bishops may allow it to be done on the Sabbath, in which case it may be completed in seventy four years, but let us not chi-

mate the progress of the work of death by the inartificial modes adopted by the petty dealers in this traffic. When on an extensive scale, it, like all other large manufactures, is capable of great improvements. As easily as a *Sarah Malcolm* could murder three or four, we can destroy as many thousands; and in as small a space of time as a *Brownrigg* could starve half a dozen children, a whole country may be destroyed by famine. Indeed, famine seems to be the most expeditious and eligible mode of destruction, and it seems to be a mode peculiarly British. In the total desolation of Munster, *Spenser* says, "All perished by the extremity of famine." In the year 1749, it was a matter of universal lamentation, that the danger to which Holland and Hanover were exposed, necessitated us to make peace at the critical moment, when the failure of the French harvest would have produced a famine, and destroyed our *natural* enemies. And no sooner had we possession of Bengal than, in the course of a few months, it is said, three Members of the British Legislature, with a few assistants, seized the crop of the country, and, by an artificial famine, destroyed, it is said, a greater number of the inhabitants than the whole population of England amounts to: much then is it to be lamented that our laudable exertions to starve the French have not hitherto been crowned with success; but, surely, we may now entertain the most sanguine hopes. The advocates for *extermination* and *eternal war* have, at length, assumed the direction. *Mr. Pitt* always faltered, and hesitated, as to the object and mode of conducting the war: but a *Barke*, a *Wyndham*, and a *Mansfield*, never could be misunderstood. *Fielding* tells us, that it is a slander on the devil to say he leaves his friends in the lurch; his half, his doubtful friends, only he abandons; may we not hope then, that, with more than human assistance, the new triumvirate will prove successful? When the Lilliputian Statesmen resolved to starve their natural enemy *Gulliver*, they issued a declaration proving how infinitely the sentence fell short of

his offence, and hoping he would submit without a murmur to the mild decree. And may not Mr. BURKE's Rhetoric, which operated so powerfully in convincing the French it was better to be loyal than to be free, be now displayed, with equal zeal, and equal success, in persuading that *miserable unhappy* people, that, in starving them, we kindly propose, a deliverance from all their misery, a cure for all their sorrows? May not the logic of Mr. Wyndham prove, that, had the French as many lives as a Cat, they have forfeited them all, and that in taking them only once we abandon a large portion of our rights? He will prove, from *Grotius* that we may destroy them as *Monsters*; from *Locke* that being enemies we may destroy them as *wild beasts*; from the Canonists that they may be put to death for *sacrilege*; from *Lord Auckland's Memorial* that they may be killed as *Regicides*; and from *Milton, Locke, Furneaux*, and all our Whig writers on toleration, that they ought to be exterminated from society as *Atheists* or *Papists*.

In destroying them by famine we adopt the *neatest* and most *elegant* mode, we do not, like *Lady Macbeth* soil our fingers with blood. Nay we may deny having killed them at all; thus we do not say that *we massacred* so many millions in India but that so many millions died of famine; by which notable contrivance we have not only the pleasure of destroying our fellow creatures, but the additional satisfaction of imputing our deeds to heaven, or, if it suits our purpose, to those whom we destroy; as *Spenser* tells us that the famine by which the people of Munster perished, "They themselves had wrought," because they were "Stout and obstinate rebels, such as will never be made dutiful and obedient." Indeed it is observable that where ever the English have gone, whether into Ireland, Asia, or the West Indies, famine constantly follows their footsteps: but it is a famine in which no Englishman ever suffered, the natives only are the victims. I will not then relinquish the hope that, under the auspices of our new Ministers, we shall succeed in destroying the French

by famine and pestilence. If we can maintain the dominion of the Sea, which, we are told, is our *natural* dominion, may we may not prevent foreign supplies? and, by continued descents on their coasts, destroy their villages and their crops? appearances seem to indicate such to be the plan of our new Ministers, and will not every true born Englishman wish them success?—One only objection occurs to me, as pestilence naturally accompanies famine, can the former like the latter, be limited to France? will not twenty seven millions of putrid carcases spread a general contagion through Europe? Certainly I mean it; for, as the object of the war is to eradicate French principles, to exterminate the people of France only will prove extremely inadequate to this important end. The gangrene of Jacobinism, we are told, is spreading rapidly and widely through Europe; and, surely, our state Surgeons are not so ignorant, or so negligent, as to confine their operation to France. The proceedings in Poland, and in Scotland, prove that they are not; and afford the pleasing hope that the vigour of their exertions will be commensurate to the extent of the danger—a danger from which famine and pestilence can alone give us any well founded expectation of deliverance. The sword, however successful, is but little adapted to root out Jacobinism. Its progress, in destruction, is too slow. It rouses to resistance, inflames the passions, promotes disquisition, and invigorates the mind. Pestilence and famine produce the contrary effects. Their havoc is not only more rapid, and extensive, than the most destructive war, but the survivors naturally sink into an abject state, well fitted to receive any yoke which may be imposed. Under such circumstances, the combined Monarchs, if they can but agree amongst themselves, may arrange Europe, nay the world itself, according to their wills. For, when Jacobinism shall be effectually eradicated from Europe, it will certainly not be difficult to root it out from amongst three or four millions of people in North America. The terror and distress of an universal

pestilence, may produce effects as powerful, and as favourable, as an irruption of Goths and Vandals : Arts, Commerce and Literature, may be involved in common ruin ; and Mr. BURKE's wishes may be gratified, in carrying us back to the state of those past ages, whose ignorance and whose barbarism we are now called to look on with envy.

Taught by past experience, those who govern us will carefully guard against those circumstances which have produced the threatened danger. Mr. *Burke* justly observes, that, Kings will in future be careful not to grant their subjects any degree of liberty—they will look with as much abhorrence on the ancient mild despotism of France, as on the limited monarchy of England. It may be hoped that they will grant no privileges to the most despicable village, knowing that when exempt from their domination, when become a refuge from their tyranny, it will rise to power and to splendor. That they will restrict commerce and manufactures within the narrowest bounds, and subject Agriculture to the most barbarous system ; recollecting, that, man to be servile, must be rendered miserable. The small portion of remaining knowledge must be carefully confined among those orders of men, which have been instituted for the purpose, of availing themselves of the ignorance of their fellow creatures, to maintain a dominion over them ; and for this purpose it will become indispensibly necessary, not merely to regulate, but to annihilate the press ; obliterating from the knowledge of mankind the Art of Printing, as effectually as preceding events have the perpetual lamp and the embalming art.

If then, we believe it to be incumbent on us to repress that spirit of Jacobinism which threaten the subversion of the antient systems of Europe, it will become us to adopt these measures, as the only ones adequate to the end proposed ; as it will become us carefully to avoid being deluded by the adoption of inefficient remedies. To partition France among the neighbouring powers would only spread her

principles more widely. To diminish her territories by conquests would be of no avail, as however limited in extent, it would still illustrate and disseminate her principles of government. No change in the persons who exercise her government, or in the forms in which it is administered, can be material; various changes have we already witnessed, and, Mr. PITT acknowledges, that they have been all inimical, and every successive change, more and more, hostile to our views. Whatever differences may exist in France, whether *Girondists* or *Maratists*, *Jacobins* or *Feuillants*, *Mountain* or *Moderates*, the Partisans of the one Constitution or the other, it is admitted, that they all hold principles adverse to the antient system of Europe, and equally incompatible with any object for which we prosecute this war. So universally are the noxious principles prevalent in France, that, in all its wide extended coast, we cannot insinuate ourselves for a moment into a single port, without recognizing the very constitution which the war was undertaken to destroy; nor can we obtain admission among the woods of Corsica, without proclaiming through Europe our sanction to principles which we avowedly hold in abhorrence, and which all the terrors of the law are exerted to eradicate from amongst us, as subversive to all order and government.

As, then, the object for which this war was undertaken cannot possibly be attained without extirpating the French, and as we have been uniformly told, that on the attainment of the object of the war, depended every thing that was dear to us, nay our very existence; it then follows, that to sign a peace with France on any terms whatever, must be signing nothing less than our own destruction, and annihilation, nor can any man propose peace with them without acknowledging the falsehood of those reasons which have been assigned for the prosecution of the war, which must be pursued on the magnificent plan of Mr. BURKE, that if we fail to extirpate the French the war must be continued until they extirpate us. — FINIS.

ON
PEACE.

BY

WILLIAM FOX.

LONDON:

SOLD BY M. GURNEY, No. 128, HOLBORN HILL.

1794.

**(PRICE THREE-PENCE, OR FIVE FOR A
SHILLING.)**

CONSCIOUS of the disgust which must be excited in the breast of every true born Englishman at the idea of peace in so early a stage of the War, it becomes me to treat so delicate a subject with the utmost caution; nor will it, I trust, be imagined, that I have assumed the Pen with the seditious view of persuading my countrymen to sheath the sword, or that I dare to insinuate, that the enormity of devastation which has characterised this war, should be pleaded in diminution of its duration. That five hundred thousand mangled corsees overspread the fields of death, is a scanty portion of human misery which can scarcely be expected to induce us to close the bloody scene, and reviewing past occurrences, we are bound to expect that during successive years, instead of successive months, the full tide of the purple stream must flow, ere with sullen and discontented minds we are willing to sit down under the shade of Peace; for however diversified may have been the motives or the pretexts for War, yet Peace never yet sprang from any other source than a failure of the means of carrying on War. Were the objects for which it was commenced fully obtained, it was still to be pursued for new objects of ambition or of interest: was the pretended danger which engaged us in War removed, new dangers still terrified us from the thoughts of Peace: Was our adversary defeated, the war was still to be pursued until he was destroyed: were we defeated ourselves, still the thoughts of Peace were abhorrent to our nature, and War must be pursued without hope and without object. If such has ever been our conduct, little ground can we have to look for Peace in the early stages of a War, avowedly termed by its great projector an *eternal* War, to be undertaken for the express purpose of extermination.

Mr. Burke labours with ardour to impress on us the laudable purpose of exterminating our enemies; *Mr. Pitt*, indeed, seems to doubt the possibility of exterminating an armed nation, of extensive popula-

tion, and possessed of immense resources; but then he holds out to us the consolatory idea, that if we cannot exterminate the French, we may be at length exterminated ourselves. No situation to which we can be reduced, he says, can justify us in making Peace with the Jacobin Government of France, and he insists on our continuing the War until our last guinea be spent, and the last man of us has fallen.

Absurd in the extreme, therefore, is it to say, that the object of this War is unexplained: surely nothing can be more clear and more definite, than that you are to exterminate your enemies, or be yourselves exterminated in the attempt: it is a clear it is a plain and obvious alternative; the first and greatest good they place before you is the destruction of your enemies, the secondary and subordinate one is the destruction of yourselves; and there is one advantage peculiar to this War, the object of it is certainly and infallibly attainable; for though even the powerful may fail in destroying their enemies, yet self destruction is certainly within the grasp of the weakest.—The most despicable wretch on earth may provoke a powerful adversary, and, without the least prospect of success, may obstinately persist in the combat; tease him with thrust after thrust, until he becomes necessitated to lay in the dust an assailant he despises, merely to get rid of the trouble of parrying his imbecile assaults.

As doubts may possibly be entertained of our ever enjoying that great and supreme good so temptingly placed before us, the extermination of the French, our attention becomes naturally turned to the secondary one,—the extermination of ourselves, and this may possibly be deemed, by some, an event sufficiently interesting, to demand a rather more accurate investigation than it has hitherto experienced. That the War is to be continued until the last guinea is spent and the last man has fallen, seems to be a text sufficiently important, to deserve illustration; and much is it to be lamented that the same great man who favoured us with the one, has neglected to

furnish us with the other: He might have informed us whether the last Guinea and the last Man were to be taken in a literal or in a figurative sense.— If only the latter, they were certainly undeserving the emphasis of his expression and the energy with which it was delivered. In that sense they must be equally applicable to most Wars; for if any ambitious project or partial interest be the object of any War, it is not to be imagined that it will be abandoned, so long as those who engaged us in the War can obtain Men or Money, by any expedient which they can adopt with safety to themselves. Let *Lord Hawkesbury* be asked, whether the American War would not have been continued to the present moment if Men and Money could have been obtained for carrying it on? The people of this country have ever plunged into War with cruel and sanguinary alacrity, but, alas! they always recoil long before the *last* Guinea or the *last* Man is exhausted. However fond of desolation and slaughter, they still imagine they may be purchased too dear. The Minister however popular, or however firmly seated in power, at the commencement of a War, is always unhorsed, when, after successive campaigns, he comes to demand the price at which the blood is to be purchased: some new faction then rises into power who make peace, which some trivial circumstance soon interrupts and the same routine takes place.

When *Mr. Pitt* tells us that the War is perfectly *unique*, that *all* is at stake, and *all* must be risked in its defence, he certainly means something more than the ordinary results of War. The millions of *consols* which *Mr. Pitt* has sold have been purchased on the speculation, that it is a commodity which will rise when peace shall take place. The moment the Money Jobbers really believe that no peace will ever be made with France this resource must fail. What mode must be then adopted? When no lure remains to obtain a voluntary loan, will a forced one be resorted to? In what order will the remaining Guineas be put in a state of requisition? Will those

which are derived from Places and Pensions be amongst the earliest or the most remote classes? — Surely it might also be excusable were we to wish to be informed in what mode the *last* Man is to be obtained: What expedients are to be adopted to compell us to defend the *Bogs of Holland* and the *Woods of Hanover*, beyond the usual gradations of lures held out to the weak; relief to the wretched; indemnity to guilt; or the more dreadful one of fraud and force spread over the land to seize every unhappy individual towards whom it may be imagined that fraud and force may be exercised with impunity. As the Jacobin Government of France has hitherto withstood those notable expedients to overthrow it, what additional ones are to be adopted? — When no hope shall remain of success in carrying on the War and defeat shall follow upon defeat; If under such circumstances we ask for Peace, will it be deemed a sufficient answer to say, that a Man is yet to be seen walking in our streets, or that there is a solitary Guinea which has not fled our land. Be it so. Harsh as this sentence of universal Death may be deemed, it falls short of *Mr. Burke's* malediction of *Eternal War*. *Mr. Pitt*, on the contrary, tells us, The world shall at length enjoy peace, when the last Englishman shall be no more. The world may then console itself with the hopes of seeing our island possessed by a less noxious race of *beings*, and its native Wolves again range through its dreary wilds. But stay. I had forgot. A more pleasing prospect opens to my view. Our well cultivated island shall not be abandoned to Wolves and Serpents. *Mr. Pitt* tells us, The last *Man* only must fall. The *Women* then, it seems, are not included in the bloody proscription, and though no partizan of liberty and equality has ever yet condescended to consider Woman as a part of the Human Race, although all their principles and systems of government, founded on the Rights of *Man*, have left the *Women* unnoticed, as though they had no existence, yet surely, when the last *Man* has fallen, on *them* the

Government must devolve, and *Mr. Pitt* will hardly insist on their pursuing the crusade against French principles. It does not follow that they will look on French Republicans with *his* malignity. Should Citizen *Chauvelin* then visit our island he may not find the unaccommodating Buckram of *Lord Grenville*. Should an embassy be then sent to Paris, the French will hardly have so far forgot their ancient politeness as not to receive it with open arms, bestow the fraternal embrace, and old animosities forgotten, a union as firm as a family compact, may then take place, not founded on the fragil basis of *diplomatique* arrangements, but built on the firm foundations of nature, and our Women may entertain sentiments very opposite to the horrible exterminating ideas of *Mr. Burke* and *Mr. Pitt*. They may venerate the great first command given to Man, and, when the last Englishman shall have fallen, may consider it as a duty devolved on them to look around for means to support the tottering fabric of society. The Thames and the Seine may entwine their branches, and even without a rape the *Romans* and the *Sabines* may become united. Thus at length, may I behold—No, alas! I am one of the proscribed. *Mr. Pitt* has sentenced me never to behold it, unless, indeed, I can hide myself in a corner, and like *Tom of Coventry* endeavour to get a peep.

But alas! vain are the views and projects of men, and more especially of politicians! It is not merely the rich colouring of fancy, with which Hope gilds the horizon, and illumines the path of life, which proves evanescent. No! happily for mankind, the wild and malignant projects which are perpetually originating from mad ambition, are as often crumbled in the dust, and *Mr. Burke's* eternal and exterminating War may be recorded to future ages, merely as a peculiar instance of desperate and profligate malignancy; for whatever temporary calamities may result, no apprehension need be entertained of its leaving any more trace behind, than have

the mad projects of universal empire formed by a *Lewis XIV.* a *William III.* or an *Alberoni*.

Assuming then with confidence, that this War will not be eternal, but that, like other Wars, it must, at length, be terminated by Peace; and, whether we consider this as an evil to be deplored, or a good to be desired, it may not be improper to consider the various circumstances under which such an event may take place, and its probable nature, and consequences.

Not in the least meaning, by speculating on Peace, to arrest the career of War; admitting the propriety of *Mr. Jenkinson's* exhortations to commence our career as a military nation, considering manufactures and commerce as subservient, if not injurious to its spirit; I do not mean to insinuate that we shall fail in finally attaining all the explained and unexplained objects for which this War is prosecuted.—When I see *Young Jenkinson* abandon chuck-farthing to thump the table in *St. Stephen's Chapel*, telling us that *he has no difficulty in saying* that our object must be to break the crust of France, march to Paris, and destroy the Jacobin Club. I for my part, have *no difficulty in saying* that I am as confident that this plan will be effected, as *Henry Fielding* was that his Captain at *Rye* would perform his magnanimous Oath, of proceeding on his voyage to Lisbon in spite of the *Winds*, the *Waves*, and the *Devil*. After this solemn declaration of the orthodoxy of my faith in the success of this War, I must, however, admit that I may possibly be mistaken. It is *possible* that the present temporary reverse, as it is called, instead of being the mere fungus of a day, may prove to be an *annual*, a *biennial*, nay a *perennial*. It is possible that we may pursue this War as a desperate stake, abandoned by *Hope*, supported by *Despair*, and surrounded with *Disgrace*; and, if such should be the case, let us employ a few moments in examining the probable result.

There are some amongst us who, disheartened by our abandonment of *Flanders* and loss of *Valenciennes*, express their wish, for a safe and *honourable Peace*.—*Absurd* in the extreme. If when this War com-

menced we were exposed to the most imminent danger, a hundred fold must that danger be increased were Peace to take place under the present circumstances. Is it to be imagined that we should be now suffered to withdraw from the combat, crowned with honour? If in pursuing the War successive years had added to our conquests and our triumphs, we certainly should have expected our reward in a glorious Peace. If, on the contrary, defeat and disgrace have taken place it will become us, with fortitude, to expect the effects in any ensuing Treaty. No circumstance has tended more to protract our Wars than our uniform discontents as to the terms on which they have been concluded. It cannot, therefore, be deemed a useless speculation, to enquire what are the terms which may be expected, under respective given circumstances.

When we first thought proper to abandon a *dark, ambiguous, offensive* neutrality, and ring the changes on the *Scheldt, Savoy, and Avignon*; had we, instead of making the then state of things a pretence for war, been really desirous of restoring and securing the peace of Europe; had we, instead of being, as *Lord Grenville* properly calls it, unaccommodating to *Citizen Chauvelin*, condescended to enter into a real negotiation with him, fully explaining the nature of the dangers we apprehended, and the terms we deemed requisite to secure us from them; and, on a compliance with those terms, had proposed an alliance for securing the peace of Europe; had such been our conduct, there is little doubt but that advantageous terms, fully adequate to such views, might have been attained. Peace and security were all that France could wish for: war could only be rendered palatable by being considered as the means of obtaining them; and the party then in power, even considered as a party, must have been interested in preserving a real and permanent peace; as the war threatened, and actually produced their destruction. Thus might peace have doubtless been ob-

tained, on the footing of national *security*, had such been our real object; but alas! the prospect of dividing or dismembering France was too tempting a bait to be abandoned for mere *security*. The Maritime part of France, the West India Islands, the uncontroled domination of the East, however injurious the possession might have proved to the *people* of England, yet certainly to its ministers they must have appeared as prizes, for the obtaining of which every thing ought to be risked. If then we sat down to play for so rich a stake, surely, if the dye turns up against us, we must be content not only to lose the stake for which we played, but an adequate one of our own which we pledged against it. If, indeed, in an early period of the game, we had carefully calculated the chances, and found the odds against us, we might have manifested our dexterity by getting rid of a losing game by inducing our adversary to draw the stakes. If, when at the commencement of the war, we had, by various means, obtained possession of *Toulon, Valenciennes, &c.* instead of holding them out as eminent successes, sufficiently warranting a continuance of the war, we had calmly considered them as resulting from the impetus of the first efforts of an extensive alliance acting in perfect unison and in full vigour; had we considered how inconsiderable, in this respect they ought to have been viewed, that it was not probable that the same uniform vigour would continue to pervade such incongruous bodies as the courts which composed the grand alliance; that a proportionate degree of success, even had it continued, would have exhausted every source from whence such efforts could have been supported, long before any material object of the war could have been obtained; but that, on the contrary, the increasing energy of the French people rather portended the arresting our progress, and tearing the laurels from our brow: Had we carefully attended to these circumstances, we might, by surrendering conquests which could be of no

use if retained, and which there was no probability we should be able to retain, have made a parade of disinterestedness, procured the restoration of conquests in Savoy, have made a peace on the ground of the *statu quo*; and, perhaps have obtained some trifling advantages for ourselves. Nay, even when we had suffered this period to elapse, when the increasing energy of the French had destroyed our illusory prospects, when their myriads had expelled us from *Toulon*, forced the lines of *Weissembourg*, and overwhelmed us with defeat and disgrace before *Dunkirk*, even then the French might have wished to have been delivered from the necessity of making such terrible exertions, or, doubting of the certainty of their continuance, might have been willing to retire into the arms of peace, on the ground of the *statu quo*. But no period has since occurred in which such terms could reasonably have been expected. If, since that period, the union of the high allies has been broken, their measures deranged, their councils disordered, their armies mouldering away, and their finances ruined; if all the original assailants have abandoned the contest, and *England*, who had recently entered the field as an auxiliary, is become the sole principal; if her *Aucklands*, her *Spencers*, and her *Wyndhams*, are seen running up and down to whip in the stray crusaders, and enlist a few thousand troops to be captured in fortress after fortress, or to rot in the bogs of Holland; and in this enterprize are become the dupes of Europe, cheated and laughed at from court to court; on the contrary, if France be seen with increasing strength and resources, trampling on all the barriers with which she is surrounded; the passes of the stupendous Alps and Pyrennees forced; the frontier fortresses subdued; pouring her armed myriads all around her; nay, what is more, if the commerce of England falls before her in an increasing proportion, threatening an annihilation of the only source which feeds and supports the war; then let us ask, what are the equitable

terms under such circumstances? If we possessed such advantages, would any minister dare to propose to abandon our conquests, or even to arrest their progress?

If Government, at a calamitous period, were to favour us with the blessings of Peace, ungrateful, in the extreme, would it be were we to murmur at those concessions being made to which the enemy, by the fair chance of War, had become entitled. If we, at the commencement of the War, with no foundation for our demand but delusive hope, insisted on *Indemnity* and *Security*, surely France, standing on her present eminence, has, at least, as good a claim. May she not reasonably insist on annexing to her empire such of her conquests as may tend to her security and advantage? May she not say, that experiencing the power of coalesced Monarchs, it is requisite, for her security, that a republican counterpoise should exist? That *Poland*, disposed to a republic shall be left undisturbed to form one, comprehending her ancient and most extensive limits, that France may at least have one Ally in Europe, standing on the same basis and united in the same common interest? and may she not also say, that England shall no longer disturb the peace of Europe with the wealth of *Indostan*: that she shall in future cease to possess the riches of *Asia*, unless her industry, her wealth, and her natural resources, will procure it her, through the medium of lawful commerce? If it be resolved to support the War beyond this crisis, it must be in confidence of a very great and extraordinary change in the aspect of affairs; whether there exists any visible cause adequate to such an effect some may doubt. If France attacked by all the great military powers of Europe, with a vigour and perseverance which was never equalled, has not only repelled their attacks, but by her energy, broken and dismayed the confederacy—exhausted their resources—weakened and dismayed with repeated defeats their numerous armies—if her ef-

forts have appeared to be, not as was predicted, a sudden and preternatural exertion, but that her resources have regularly increased, and manifested a stability unshaken amidst all the convulsions her Government has experienced — if, indeed, England, standing alone and abandoned by her Allies, can stem this mighty torrent, take Spain, Italy, Germany, and Holland, under her protection, drive their enemies at all points back into his own territories, pursue him with her all conquering arm, and overwhelm him with her terrible vengeance; make France to its utmost limits tremble before her, lick the dust at her feet, and bend the neck to her yoke; then indeed may we justly claim *Mr. Jenkinson's* epithet of a military nation: *Almanza* and *Briuegua* shall be forgotten: *Fontenoy*, *St. Cas*, and *Closter Seven*, shall be consigned to oblivion: *Braddock* and *Burgoyne* shall be no more remembered: Then may we prepare to gather our well earned laurels, we shall desend to future ages, not merely as the Desolators and Oppressors of Ireland, the plunderers of Asia, the Kidnappers of Africa, and the base Slave-holders of the West: but crowned with Glory, eclipsing the triumphs of ancient Rome, and should out new ministers by buying men abroad, and ——— them athome, effect this mighty project, then the most sceptical amongst us will surely admit that miracles have not ceased. On the contrary, suppose all the puny efforts of a *Wyndham* to fail, in stemming this mighty torrent; suppose defeat and retreat to become the order of the day, and yet that we persist in playing a desperate game, and venturing a deeper stake; then let us for a moment deliberate on the probable result.

Whatever degrading and opprobrious language contending governments may pour on each other, with a view to inflame and stimulate their respective subjects to aid them in effecting their ambitious projects, yet, does it not follow that villifying epithets

and insulting recriminations must necessarily become an obstacle to a treaty of peace. When the parties become exhausted by War, they at length prove to be as unmeaning as those protestations of perpetual friendship and eternal amity, with which treaties of peace are always prefaced. But though words are no obstacle to treating for peace, yet actions may become such. If those who govern, or who may hereafter govern France, shall perceive that when all the great powers of the continent are disposed to abandon their projects against France (whatever they might be) as useless or as hopeless, and they see England stand forth alone to uphold the banners of war—if her emissaries are seen spreading over Europe to gather its scattered remnants, and fan the dying embers—if sustaining the war to the last shilling and the last man, appears to be not merely the tropes of oratory, but as bearing a real and unequivocal import, it then seems to follow, that every principle on which negotiation can ever take place is totally done away. No motive for France ever listening to terms of accommodation can then possibly exist.

Whatever disparity there may be between contending nations, however the events of war may have depressed the one or exalted the other; yet any negotiation for peace must proceed on the principle, that the triumphant has some ground yet remaining for fear, and the depressed for hope. The conqueror can have no motive for assenting to a treaty securing his conquests, unless those with whom he treats possess some degree of power, which may disturb him in the possession; nor will he enter into any compact which can circumscribe their extent, unless it be with those whom he supposes are in some degree able to stop their progress. The nation who has totally exhausted all means of offence and defence can therefore have no pretence to treat: she can only claim it on the ground that she has something which she can defend, or that there is something which she can gua-

rantee. If then we persist in this war, not on the ground of there being a *possibility* of success, but merely because we *can* continue it--if, weaker and weaker, we present a hostile front to our adversary until at last we can no longer even aim the imbecile stroke, and we lie breathless and unnerved before him; it will then be only for us to wait and see whether he will spare us from pity or contempt, or crush us from indignation or vengeance.

To those who shall survive the present conflict, so terminated, it may become an interesting circumstance to see what will be the conduct of France, in so new and important a situation. Will she say, behold the nation, who has long looked on us with unabating and implacable animosity; who has uniformly arraigned the order of Providence by stigmatizing us as her natural enemy; who, for above a century, had intrigued with all the powers of Europe to distress and to destroy us; who secure from the ravages of war, by her insular situation, had involved Europe in perpetual and bloody contests, that, while it was convulsed, she might seize all the commerce of the world: See the nation who, while the riches of our merchants were on the ocean, in confidence of the law of nations, swept the whole into her ports, and then dared to exult in the superiority thereby obtained: but, above all, see her who had long derived advantage from the ancient authority of her Kings being diminished, the oppressive jurisdiction of her Nobles annihilated, and the accumulated wealth of her clergy dispersed, yet were so dead to all the feelings of humanity as to insult us as slaves, because subject to the yoke; and yet when, with unprecedented energy, we had shaken off our despotism, were so far from encouraging us with her countenance, aiding us with her support, or assisting us with her advice, that when we looked anxiously around and solicited universal peace, she spurned our alliance, refused the office of mediator to shield us from the horrors of war, looked on while the Despots gathered round us,

and at last headed the blood hounds of war, while her Senate, her Pulpits, and her Press, overflowed with such torrents of diversified base malignity as to excite a doubt whether the wickedness or the folly were predominant. See her now lie helpless before us. Shall we terminate her existence as a nation? shall Asia, shall Africa, shall America, rejoice in her destruction? shall she no longer contaminate the page of history, and disgrace the human species?

Whatever line of conduct the French may adopt under such circumstances, it is to be feared we have given them, by our conduct, too just a plea, and too strong a sanction. If we carried on the war to give them the blessings of our constitution, they may, if they chuse it, give us theirs. If we intended to give them a King, Lords, and Clergy, they may imagine they have as good a right to take ours away. If their interest prompts them to interfere in our internal Concerns, to arrange our Laws, our Government, and our Property, the speeches of Mr. Pitt, Lord Mansfield, &c. will be authorities to the point. If they wish to parcel out the nation amongst their friends, they may refer to our Treaties with our Allies; and should they wish for good Ports in the Channel, they may, to save the expence of making one at *Cherbourg*, keep possession of *Portsmouth* and *Plymouth*, and insist on choaking up the *Thames*, and refer us to *Dunkirk*, *Calais*, and *Gibraltar*. Perhaps, they may wish to make the fertile part of our island a potatoe garden; or they may think our pastures are fit to breed sheep, to supply with wool the French manufactures, and beef and pork to victual their navies; they may then drive us, like a herd of goats, into the mountains of Scotland, and Wales; call the rest of the island the French pale, shoot us like wolves and pole-cats, if we dare to enter it, parcel it out amongst the friends of the Committee of Safety, give the tythes to some French Atheists, on condition of their sub-

scribing creeds which every body know they laugh at; then they may send *Tom Paine* to govern us, and, if we murmur, they may point to *Ireland*. Should they happen to see our East-India charter, it may suggest the thought of selling the island and inhabitants to him, for half a million *per annum*; or perhaps, they may deem it more profitable were they to employ our Liverpool ships to convey all the young men, women, and children, and sell them to the people of France; the sale would diminish their debts, and furnish labourers to cultivate the vineyards, while their inhabitants, instead of working, might dance the *carmagnol*, and sing *ca ira*. In such case, they might find plenty of evidence, produced before a committee of the House of Commons by Lords, and Knights, and Squires, proving the miserable situation of the people of England, and how much they would be benefited by being made slaves.

But it is possible that some sublime and beautiful Orator, or some subtle Logician, may rise in the National Convention, and contend, with violence, for absolute extermination. He may contend that English principles are detestable, and incompatible with all order and government. He may contend that to suffer a nation to exist, whose government, and whose laws, are derived from barbarous ages, and savage nations, is an example dangerous to civil society. Should he hear that an inclement season had destroyed our harvest, and that, without a large foreign supply, famine and pestilence must desolate the land, he might urge them to seize the happy moment, and, at one stroke, destroy those enemies to order and government. The advice might be adopted; our island might be declared in a state of starvation; and, as if infested with the plague, we might be cut off from the world, and all mankind prohibited from relieving our distress, and even this they may ignorantly suppose even a Royal Proclamation to have sanctioned.

If then we suppose that *French power*, combined

with *English principles*, may produce such effects, it may possibly be doubted whether it would be more calamitous if *French power*, if it becomes predominant, were to act on *French principles*. They, perhaps, may not prove so calamitous and so mischievous as some apprehend. Confraternity does not seem to be much worse than extirpation. Let half a million of fellow creatures in the *West Indies* tell us if there be not greater evils than even Fraternization. Cannot *Indostan* tell us that conquerors can overwhelm a country with more dire calamities than melting Church bells and seizing Church plate; and *Ireland* may, probably, imagine that the abolition of Tythes is not the most diastrous law which a powerful nation may impose on a weaker.

Should we at length fall into the hands of our enraged adversaries, after having for years poured out every degrading and insulting epithet on them, we may, perhaps, at length happily experience their falsehood; their conduct may even fall short of our present conduct in *Indostan*, they may not dissolve all the landed property of the kingdom, they may not dispose of the rent of every acre of our land among the miscreants whom France may vomit forth. It is possible, that we may find, that the principal evils we shall have to experience, may be those which the War produced, not those, against which it was to guard us. We may find, that like the *American Contest*, we have involved ourselves in the calamities of War, to avoid ideal danger, nay that even unexpected benefits may result. Should the War terminate in depriving us of all our foreign dependencies, should the plunder of *India* no longer deluge our land, should our mart of slavery no longer exist, and should our Ministers be delivered from the thralldom of governing a neighbouring Island, should we behold in our Sovereign merely a King of Great Britain, and our House of Commons cease to be crouded with the representatives of *West India Slavery* or an *East India Squad*, it is possible that the change produced on our Government, our Laws, and general Polity may not prove extremely calamitous.—FINIS.

(1)

OF all the peculiar circumstances which characterize the present æra, it is not the least remarkable, that Charges of *High Treason* should be brought forward at a period which seems to be so unappropriate, that it is become requisite to dress up this branch of our *Law* in a mode so novel, that its most prominent features can scarcely be recognised.

At every former period, when *Trials for Treason* have engaged the attention of our Courts, the occasion has been obvious. Some *rebellion* had convulsed the Land; a competitor had claimed the *Throne*; or a belief of serious attempts against the life of the *Sovereign*, had occasioned a general alarm that it was in *danger*. But we now see *Britons* dragged before the Bar of Justice *en masse* as *Traitors*, at a time when no War exists but a *foreign one*, which has been sedulously, if not wantonly, sought for; and in which it must have been madness in the extreme to have engaged us, had it been believed that there existed amongst us the seeds of a dangerous conspiracy against the State. It was a firm persuasion that the people were attached not only to the *King*, but even to his *Ministers*, in an unexampled degree, which emboldened us to engage in projects of wild ambition; and if their failure has excited discontent it was a natural effect. It was the discontents, arising from the ill success of a former War, which raised the *Minister* to his present situation; and absurd, in the extreme, must it be to stigmatize as *Traiterous* those discontents which *Mr. Pitt*, and his Coadjutors, excited in a former War, or those which may now exist. To whatever extent our discontents may prevail, yet never was there a period in which they had so little relation to *Treason*. No one disputes the *King's Title to the Crown*; and so far are we from wishing for a diminution of *His Prerogative*, that, when it was apprehended a former *House of Commons* was attempting an encroachment the Nation arose almost to a Man, joined

Mr. Pitt as the avowed *Champion* of Prerogative, and thus enabled him to crush the most formidable *Parliamentary Coalition* that ever had existence. Some, there are, indeed, who believe that "The influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished;" and Mr. Pitt, having, it is said, loudly proclaimed through the nation that an *East India Nabob* had eight Members in our *House of Commons*, and that it is so constituted that foreign Powers may purchase seats, and, by putting in their Agents, control our Government, some are apt to imagine that such a body, possessing so large a share in the Government, is dangerous to the Community, and ought to be reformed. From the nature of the late American contest it is not extraordinary if the *Duke of Richmond*, Mr. Burke, and the other Partizans of America, should have disseminated *Republican Principles*, and if there be some who, like Mr. Burke, "admire a Republic," who exclaim "That the Americans could not bear the smell of *Monarchy*, even at 3000 miles distance;" yet is there no reason to suppose that even such men wish the death of the *King*, because they know the only effect would be that the *throne* would be instantly filled by another; and whatever contempt for the King Mr. Burke may have disseminated, yet is there not an individual who wishes to see him "hurled from his throne," unless he be among those who look for a place from his successor. Does the conduct of the Sovereign manifest any idea of his danger? has he doubled his guards? or does he wear a coat of mail? No! he walks and rides about, justly unconscious of fear; and if his *Ministers* think that there is one individual who is plotting his destruction, they are traitors to their Sovereign in suffering him to go so exposed. But they know he is in no danger; and it may be surmised that they resort to the *Law of Treason* to protect themselves, not him. So far are they from fearing any civil commotion, that they scatter the national force through distant regions; and, instead of ap-

prehending it to be needed for the purpose of quelling domestic rebellion, they can spare it to protect *Holland* and *Hanover*, to guard the *Pope*, and to—*India*. Of domestic insurrection we have, indeed, had some instances: but, far from being treasonable, they were merely Church and King Mobs, incited by some of the zealous friends of the Ministers to plunder and murder a few individuals, who were pointed out as being inimical to their measures. Through the whole range of our history, not a period can be discovered which seems to have so little reference to the Law of Treason, and some may be apt to ask, whether our Ministers now resort to it on any other principle than that on which a drunken carman, when he gets well drubbed in an affray abroad, comes home and wreaks his vengeance on his wife and children.

However extraordinary it may be deemed that the cry of Treason should be heard at such a period, yet it cannot be deemed extraordinary that, if it be heard, it should be heard to babble the gibberish of the times. If it be exhibited to the public view we must expect to see it dressed *a-la-mode*, and shaped to the fashion of the day; and it is a fortunate opportunity for those who attend the toilet of *Treason* to manifest their adroitness and ingenuity, in fitting her to their purpose. If this be too difficult a task they must then throw dust in our eyes; or, while they are calling on us to behold the work they place before us, it must be enveloped in a mist, that we may be unable to detect its imperfections. A *Blackstone* may have told us that "*Treason is a crime which ought to be most precisely ascertained; for if it be indeterminate, this alone is sufficient to make any government degenerate into arbitrary power;*" yet we need not be surprized if a judge should now say to a jury "*it is impossible that any certain rule should be laid down for your government,*" that treasonable acts "*must remain for ever*

infinitely various—that “*men assembled peaceably may finally and suddenly involve themselves in the crime of High Treason*”—and “*that the process is very simple*” whereby, even “*honest men, lovers of their country, nay, loyal to their prince, if eagerly bent on speculative improvement,*” may be subjected to the most horrible sentence which the law has devised to punish the “*greatest crime against faith, duty, and human society.*” If a judge should thus pronounce that *honest men, lovers of their country, and loyal to their prince, peaceably assembled,* may be dragged before a Revolutionary Tribunal, *which has no certain rule laid down for its government,* and if a jury should return humble thanks to the judge, that honest men, and lovers of their country, are thus liable to be dragged before them for offences into which *they may be suddenly involved, if they happen to be bent on speculative improvements,* may we not be permitted to ask whether this alarming doctrine be an excrescence from existing circumstances, intended to make “terror the order of the day,” for the suppression of speculation on improvements in Government, which our Ministers suppose to be peculiarly dangerous because from themselves they originated, because but for them they would never have engaged the public attention, and because the Societies, which they themselves formed for their dissemination, have persevered in the conduct marked out for them, and have refused to “face about” at the command of their drill serjeants, with the adroitness which a rigid disciplinarian might expect.

As I never had the honour of belonging to a Constitutional, or a Corresponding Society, or enlisted under the banners of Parliamentary Reform—As the celebrated letter to Colonel Sharman failed to convince me of the necessity, or wisdom, of calling on a licentious mob to assume the Legislative Authority, who had just attempted to lay the capital in ruins, and murder the Chief Justice of England. As I was silly enough to laugh at *Mr. Pitt's* plan of regenerating the House of Commons, by a revolu-

tionary process of 100 years—As even *Mr. Dundas's* speech in favour of Parliamentary Reform produced no very powerful conviction on my mind—As, however fully the speeches of *Citizens Pitt, Burke, Wyndham, and Richmond, &c.* might prove the vileness, and corruption, of the assemblies they harangued, yet I rather thought it preferable to leave them in possession of the powers they possessed, than risk the peace of the community by attempting to rescue it from their hands; as having had invariably these views it will be hardly imagined that I mean to defend the disorderly recruits whom *Serjeant Richmond* and *Corporal Pitt* have enlisted in the cause of *Parliamentary Reform*. To “advance” when they should “face about,” to “march” when ordered to “halt,” were circumstances sufficiently provoking to any leader, whether strutting at the head of his corps in *St. James's Park* or in *St. Stephen's Chapel*. But let the offence be properly charged, and let the punishment be appropriate; let them be tied up to the halbert or whipped out of the regiment; but do not shoot them for desertion. If, in 1782, *Citizen Pitt*, or in 1792, *Citizen Tooke*, clamour for a reform of the House of Commons, what, in the name of common sense, can it have to do with a branch of our law founded solely on a statute made centuries before any thing which had a resemblance to our House of Commons existed? If *Queen Elizabeth* vouchsafed to order some despicable Boroughs in Cornwall to send up 16 members to attend in the lower House of Parliament, where they were ordered to interfere in no political concerns without her permission; if in the next century they conspired to murder her successor, exclude his son from the throne, and establish a Revolutionary Government; and, suppose a century afterwards some persons should insist that these Cornish Burgesses should be reduced to their original nothingness, I do not say but laws may be made inflicting specific pains and penalties on those who shall dispute the right of these Cornish Bur-

gesse to the share they possess in the Legislature; but it is not easy to discover how they can derive protection from laws made to protect the lives of monarchs, whom they have murdered, or to fortify that regal power which they have encroached on, if not subverted. If the biscuit bakers, and all the other rabble, who fill the seats in St. Stephen's Chapel, wish to protect their sacred persons, by those awful sanctions with which the ancient laws of the kingdom guarded the sovereign, his consort, and the heir to the throne; if it be requisite to deem an attack upon them to be equivalent to a rebellion against the monarch's authority, why cannot those things be effected by an enacting law? such was the mode adopted by their worthy predecessors, in the middle of the last century, adroit as they were in adopting the fiction of taking up arms by his authority against the life and person of the sovereign, yet it never entered their heads that conspiracies against the House of Commons were overt acts of compassing the death of the King! If they had, their proceedings might have assumed a more legal form; and, instead of charging the King with the strange fiction of Treason against the People of England, he might have been indicted on the Statute of Edward III. for compassing and imagining his own death; and seizing the five members and conspiring against the House of Commons laid as the overt acts of the Treason; as a Judge has solemnly delivered it as Law, that "a force upon the Parliament *must be* immediately directed against the King." But it seems that Parliament, though anxious to intrench themselves deep in the Law of Treason, had no idea of this subtilty, and were therefore necessitated to take the plain road; and, in the course of seven years, passed no less than eleven acts on Treason, whereby "whoever shall contrive, or endeavour to stir up, or raise force against the present Government, or for the subversion, or *alteration* (that is Parliamentary Reform) of the same, and shall declare the

same by any open deed, shall be deemed and adjudged to be guilty of High Treason." Thus these ignorant men were at the trouble of making eleven acts to constitute attempts to obtain a Parliamentary Reform Treason, although, as is now discovered, it was then already Treason, by the existing laws, of which even a *Hale*, then on the Bench, was ignorant.

We are told "that a project for a Convention, which has for its object the obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, and that object only, but the obtaining it without the authority of Parliament, and steps taken upon it would be High Treason in all the actors in it! Now, I must acknowledge that, from the first moment in which I could spell a page in the English History, I have uniformly beheld the *House of Commons* with the utmost loathing, whether I considered their vile servility to all the capricious and diversified cruelties of the Tudors, their cunning cajoling conduct to the silly *James*, their deep and infernal policy in murdering his Successor, and usurping the regal power, and their despicable imbecility when trampled on by *Cromwell*; when I trace the dreadful labyrinths of *perjury* which characterize their Journals in the reign of *Charles II.* or their inertness under the important circumstances which distinguished the time of *James II.* let it be supposed then, that with these views, I had lived in the year 1688, I might then possibly have joined a body of conspirators at *Chalk Farm*, all "Honest Men, Loyal to their King, and Lovers of their Country," and "an Impetuous Man might have precipitated us into crimes of unforeseen danger, and magnitude," by thus addressing us, "Citizens a foreign army has landed in the Kingdom, and has been suffered to march to London, under colour of a Declaration that the General only meant to deliver us from some grievance under which, he says, we groan, and to remedy which he promised to call a free Parliament, instead of fulfilling his promise

He has seized on the King's Palace, ordered Him by a *Lettre de cachet*, to retire to *Rochester*, and thus rendered it impossible that any Parliament, on the principles of our Constitution, can ever exist, as of such Parliament the King is an "*integral part*;" having dissolved the old Government, they tell us the Government devolves upon the people: but, instead of assembling a *Convention of the People* to form a new Government, or to reorganise the old, we see this wretch assemble the *Common Council of London*, and the old corrupt *House of Commons*, who are so far from being chosen by the People of *England*, that, it is said, 162 persons can command a majority, with this majority the *House of Lords* has been terrified, and necessitated to comply with "*existing circumstances*" and under this sanction this foreign General is about to be placed on the throne. Will you suffer this traiterous design against your lawful Sovereign to take place? No! let us take our Pikes, enter *St. Stephen's Chapel*, and dye the *Silver Thames with the Blood of the Monsters.*" Suppose, deluded by such a Speech, we had issued forth to execute the design, and had been seized, and brought to trial for Treason, and a Judge had told the Jury that "a force upon the Parliament *must be* immediately directed against the King," and, consequently, that a conspiracy and intention to attack the Members of the House of Commons, to prevent their dethroning the Sovereign, was an overt act of compassing and imagining his death. But, perhaps, it may be deemed counter-revolutionary to treat so disrespectfully the *immortal William*, I will, therefore, suppose the *National Convention of France* to send over *Tom Paine*, with 16,000 troops; that the King's Ministers and Children should conspire with the 162 Persons, who, we are told, can command a majority in the *House of Commons*, and that they should attempt to place *Tom Paine* upon the Throne; suppose some Persons, who might object to the King's being thus "*hurled from his Throne*," were to meet at *Chalk Farm*, provide

es, and take measures for attacking the *House of Commons*; this would, it seems, be Treason, even though we thereby preserved the *King on his throne*, for we are told, "*a force upon the Parliament must be directed against the King.*"

But, here, I may be told that I am wandering amongst the absurdest of imaginations, to suppose it to be possible that the *House of Commons* can ever, for a moment, fail of entertaining the *profoundest veneration, the warmest attachment, and the most inviolable fidelity*, to the *Sovereign*. Our political Trinitarians will tell us that though *King, Lords, and Commons*, are *three*, yet that these three are *one*; and that, therefore, it is perfectly safe to consider a conspiracy against the *Cornish Boroughs* as the outward and visible sign of an inward and treasonable design against the life of the *Sovereign*. Whether this fine spun theory of mixed Government be warranted by nature, and experience, may possibly be doubted. The Government of nations is *too rich a booty* to be cordially, and peaceably, divided: nor does the union seem to be of such a permanent nature as to warrant its becoming a principle of Law.—The Law of Treason was framed to give a special protection to the *Sovereign*; nor does it seem any more consistent with *Loyalty* than with *Law* to share it among those who have wrested a portion of the sovereign Power from the hands of the Monarch. In what age would our Kings have considered conspiracies against the *lower House of Parliament* as on a footing with Treason against themselves? even though the *House of Commons* generously gave the Crown to the *immortal William*, yet it is not very certain that even *he* would have considered it as Treason had they been blown up into the air, by a new Gunpowder Plot. Oh! but, we shall be told that, the case is prodigiously altered; that, however scurvily this *lower House of Parliament* may have used our former Monarchs, yet they have chosen the *House of Hanover* as their peculiar favourite; and, therefore, the least that the

Crown, and the Crown Lawyers, can do in return is to dignify it with all the sanctions, and all the prerogatives, which our *laws* gave to our ancient Sovereigns. Were the fact true, the interence might be deemed natural: but I think Historians tell us that, before *George I.* had been two years on the throne, he feared to trust the 162 persons who, we are told, enjoy the right of nominating a majority of the House of Commons, to send him a new one; and he was necessitated actually to change the Constitution of Parliament, to attempt which, I think, is now laid down to be Treason: though indeed it is the *shortening* of Parliaments, which is alluded to as a criminal attempt. Whether a conspiracy to *lengthen* them be as criminal, we are left in the dark; though the distinction seems to be rather arbitrary, for it does not seem to be any more treasonable to conspire to *shorten* Parliament, from 7 to 3 years, than to conspire to *lengthen* them from 3 to 7. The same great authority lays down, as "*a principle never to be departed from, that alterations in the Law of holding Parliaments can only be effected by the King, Lords and Commons*": supposing then the House of Commons to possess a *Divine* right (I say *Divine* right, because I know of no other they can claim) to a third share of the Government, yet it, certainly, can be only for the limited time for which they are chosen.— At its expiration they return among the "*Swinish Multitude*," from whence they were taken; the persons who chose them may be dead, the burgage tenure, or the borough which communicates this *Divine* right of governing may, by descent, or purchase, have gone into other hands; the *old* Representatives can be deemed but *leaseholders*, and, at the expiration of their terms, could no more possess any right to govern than the Scotch Convention, or any other body of men; whence it, perhaps, seems to follow that the Members of the House of Commons, who met in 1717, may by some, be deemed to have come within the description

of " *People met together in Convention in order to usurp the Government of the Country;*" any one step towards which, we are told, would be the clearest High Treason. And it may be worthy consideration whether this construction of the Law of Treason might not implicate the then King, and House of Lords.

If such consequences follow, from considering a Convocation of the People to change the frame and constitution of the House of Commons as Treason against the Sovereign, we shall be involved in still greater difficulties, when we consider that this strangely constituted body, which *Mr. Pitt* tells us, consists, in part of the Representatives of *East India Nabobs* and is liable even to be subjected to *foreign influence*, have sometimes made great efforts to awe the Monarch, and control him in the exercise of his undoubted prerogatives, nay, even since they have placed their favourite House of Hanover on the Throne. Some, indeed, have imagined that the policy of our Revolutionists was to introduce a *foreign* family, on purpose that it might become abjectly dependent upon the lower House of Parliament. If, in such a juncture, "*Honest men, loyal to their Prince,*" were to meet in Convocation to overawe *such* a House of Commons, nay, even to endeavour to change its Constitution, when they saw it attempting to encroach on the prerogatives of the Crown, and, possibly, under the influence of foreign Powers, it surely seems to be not merely a *constructive*, but a *strangely constructive*, Treason, to deem such attempts, to control the *lower* House of Parliament, to be overt acts of conspiring the death of the King, though actually intended to guard his Life and Prerogatives from the incroachments of the House of Commons.

Those who imagine these cases to be imaginary, who suppose the House of Commons and the Sovereign to be always in unison, ought to look a little farther than speeches from the Throne, and addresses to it. They will do well, if they wish to

understand the true nature of the British Government, not to trust solely to forms and customs, let them read *Bishop Newton's Life*, prefixed to his Works, and they will see in how degraded a situation a King of England may appear. They may see a triumphant party in this *lower* House of Parliament, not merely *treating* with the Sovereign, but *imposing terms* on him which in some measure to avert he was necessitated to resort to something so much like artifice as to excite our pity if not our contempt: but perhaps it is not requisite to refer to Books or Events, which the lapse of half a Century has consigned to oblivion. No, scarcely *ten years have elapsed* since the most discordant sounds were heard, from among the several branches of our *well balanced* Government, a discord so harsh, and resounded so loudly through the land, that I heard it in my garret. I was told "*That the House of Commons had overawed the Sovereign, forced themselves into the Cabinet, necessitated the King to bestow all the great Offices of the executive Government on men whom he abhorred, who had, for years, opposed all his measures, and some of whom had treated him with the most degrading insult; that he was necessitated to submit to be dragged to his throne, to have the hateful words La Roy le veult grated in his ears, without daring to express a murmur at Bills which he loathed, and which were levelled at despoiling him of his influence, as his Predecessors had been despoiled of their authority. I was told that this House of Commons had crammed the Royal Stomach, with PORTLANDS, and BURKES, and WYNDHAMS, until it heaved with the loathsome potions, when at length Pitt and Co. got access to the Sovereign, and exhorted him to discharge the noisome mess, in confidence that the People would overawe the House of Commons, and support the Monarch.*" Having ever uniformly abhorred the House of Commons, having ever considered the power of which they had, in the last Century, bereaved the Monarch, as far more dangerous and injurious to the People when in their hands, than in the

hands of even the *worst* of our Kings. I exulted, therefore, in the event. I walked 30 miles to give an unsolicited vote to a perfect Stranger, in opposition to applications which it was painful to resist. We succeeded. The 162 persons, who, we are told, return a majority of the House of Commons, would not, or could not, resist the general voice. But, suppose the reverse, suppose these 162 had persisted in obtruding the PORTLANDS, WYNDHAMS, BURKES, and ELLIOTS, on the Sovereign; suppose then I had conspired with others having the same views, suppose Mr. PITT or some other person had said,—“ Shall 162 individuals not only give law to ten millions of People, but shall they equally control their Will, and trample on the Prerogatives of the Crown, and the Privileges of the Peers of the realm? Shall these 162 be permitted to claim the exclusive right of holding the Public Purse, of dispensing it, with wanton prodigality, when permitted to divide amongst themselves the great Offices of the State: but threatening to withhold the most necessary supplies, threatening to disorganize the State, by refusing to meet the most pressing public exigencies, unless the Sovereign abandons his ancient and undoubted Prerogatives, and suffers them to fill all the great Offices of the executive Government with their creatures, and passes every Bill they may chuse to manufacture? And shall the King, and his People, be thus set at defiance by an inconsiderable body of men unknown to our Ancestors, but who being suffered, by some of our Sovereigns, to attend upon him in Parliament, and lay their humble Petitions at the foot of the throne, have, by degrees, not merely possessed themselves of a share of legislative power, but, assuming the character of Representatives of the People, can thus set both the People and the Sovereign at defiance; say, will you suffer 162 individuals to seize the Helm of State, compelling the King to give it to the DUKE OF PORTLAND; or, will you rise in support of the Royal Right, to bestow it upon Mr. PITT?— Shall we enter into St. Stephen's Chapel, dash out the Speaker's brains, with his mace, and bear away

the Heads of the Whole Body on our pikes?— Shall we any longer suffer the Cornish Boroughs to send Nabobs and Slave-holders to give Laws to us and our King? Or shall he enjoy his Prerogatives, uncontroled, unless, when we have destroyed the present lower House of Parliament, he shall deem it expedient to form one on a plan more consistent with the public happiness, and with his Prerogatives” — Whether such a speech would have been *illegal, absurd and wicked*, I will not inquire; nor will I dispute but, had the purpose been carried into effect, we might have been executed as *murderers and rioters*, but I wish to ask Mr. ANSTRUTHER, Whether he would have advised his Party to indict us for compassing and imagining the death of the King, and have laid, as the overt act, a conspiracy not indictable of itself, and which could no way support a charge of Treason, but on a supposition of its being intended against the *Life of the King*, when the sole intention of the conspirators was precisely the reverse, and (whether mistakenly or otherwise is not the question) to *defend* the King, and to *rescue* him from a dependence on a body of men who had murdered one of his Ancestors.

It must be recollected that no conspiracy or preparation to levy War, is of itself Treason. — The War must be actually levied, and against the King, to make it so. If, then, circumstances occur in almost every period of our History, ancient and modern, wherein a conspiracy against the *lower House of Parliament* might exist, and yet be so far from implicating a design against the *Life of the King*, that it might spring from motives and principles not only *unconnected*, but even adverse to it, one would hardly have imagined, unless we had it from very high authority, that “It seems to follow, as a necessary consequence, that a project of a Convention, which should have for its object the obtaining a *Parliamentary Reform*,

and that object only, but the obtaining it without the authority of Parliament, and steps taken upon it, would be High Treason in all the actors in it."

Nay, if a project to reform the *lower House* of Parliament be of such a formidable nature, as that attempts to obtain an exclusion of Cornish Burgesses, or an East India Squad, must be construed as "*a conspiracy to overturn the Government;*" it may, possibly, seem to imply that this *lower House* of Parliament has acquired a greater importance, and a larger share, in the Government, than it formerly enjoyed, or, than, as some may think, it ought to possess. That an actual insurrection to destroy the *lower House* of Parliament may be an offence amenable to our Laws, on the same principle as an Insurrection to destroy *Meeting Houses* has been deemed so, I mean not to dispute; because, though the object and intention of the insurgents were laudable, yet, as the means they take to effect the purpose is dangerous to the State, as it is impossible to limit the effects of a popular Commotion, as it may ever endanger the safety of the Sovereign, the *Law* very properly interposes its sanction, to secure the Peace and Safety of the State. But, however dangerous such commotions may be deemed, though a fertile imagination may fancy that they are, "*In effect to introduce Anarchy, and that which Anarchy MAY CHANCE to settle down into after the King may have been brought to the scaffold, and after the Country has suffered all the miseries which discord and Civil War MAY produce;*" yet, as it does not follow that the intention of the insurgents must necessarily be the Destruction of the *King*, such insurrections never yet have been deemed *overt acts* of compassing or imagining his *Death*; far less have *conspiracies* for such Purposes been considered as such. They have, like other criminal purposes, been left unnoticed by our Laws, until they actually ripened into action.

If, owing to *existing circumstances* it may even afford a temporary security to the Monarch, to deem a conspiracy against the *lower* House of parliament as on a footing with a conspiracy against his Life, yet may there be danger in establishing it as a principle of Law: *existing circumstances* may take place in which the principle may be considered as approximating to Treason, because it seems to imply that the Government vests in *them* as well as in Him, which is not the language of our Law. Our ancient Monarchs, certainly, would not have been very much gratified with such a description of their Government, and, if our Kings have, of late years, suffered the *lower* House of Parliament to possess the Government of the Country, it does not seem very natural that we are to become the sufferers, and be implicated in crimes unknown to our Ancestors: for neither amongst all the adjudged cases, from the *Year books* to *Burrows*, nor in all our *cart loads* of Law Books, from *Bracton* to *Blackstone*, will Treason against the *House of Commons* be found. Our *modern* Lawyers have set out on a Voyage of Discovery, a circum-navigation of Treason; and though their industry seems to be great, and their nautical skill no less considerable, their success appears not to be adequate; or, at least, their *new* discovered Land is enveloped in a mist, impervious to common eyes. Thus we are told that, " *This case, which I state to you, is a NEW and a DOUBTFUL case;*" though, indeed, we are told, " *Thus far is clear;*" and what is it that is so clear? why, " *That a force upon the Parliament must be immediately directed against the King, who is an integral part of it; it must reach the King, or it can have no effect at all;*" whether this be clear, whether it be true, we may, perhaps, more particularly examine, when we come to investigate the Law upon the Question. At present, the absurdity of the new Law of Treason, on principles of common sense, is all which it is meant to discuss.

Poor Richard's Scraps. No. I.

London: Sold by M. Gurney, No. 128, Holborn-Hill,
Price 3d. or four for 9d.

POOR RICHARD blushes not to own, that after having performed with alacrity that task which the duty to his numerous family day by day imposes on him, he suffers his mind to range beyond that subordinate and limited sphere, to which the hand of providence seems more immediately to have confined it. And he then feels himself not merely the parent of a numerous offspring, justly looking to him for support, but as a citizen of the world, a member of the great commonwealth of mankind, and cannot but attend with some anxiety to the occurrences of an *eventful* period. With this disposition he lately perused a celebrated manifesto; and, as the facts did not exactly correspond with the views he had hitherto entertained, nor the explanations appear to be extremely obvious or satisfactory, he began to revolve in his mind, what reply the French people might naturally adopt, in case they were to exchange the manufacture of *muskets* and *pikes* for that of *manifestos*. Retiring to rest, that undisturbed repose, the result of a peaceful mind and a laborious occupation, was disturbed by a *vision*, the obvious result of a previous train of thought. He imagined he beheld *Britannia* very busily employed, distributing these manifestos; when suddenly the *genius* of *France* was unveiled to view, and holding in her left hand one of the manifestos which she appeared to have just perused, with her right she stilled the clamors of war which had spread around, and with firm and dignified aspect she advanced to address *Britannia*; nor did *Timotheus's* lyre range through the grand scale of Harmony with greater effect than her voice and manner produced in adapting themselves to the sentiments, which she delivered. A faint trait of sprightly satire first played upon her features, when the simplicity becoming plain narration was quickly changed to that dignity becoming unempassioned reasoning, from whence it passed to mild expostulation, and rose, with gradual dignity, to stern reproach, and bold defiance.

Conscious as he is of his inability to detail her captivating harangue, and that the waking relation of a dream can but convey an extremely faint idea of the impression made on the visionary fancy, yet cannot he resist the inclination he feels to convey that faint idea.

The *extreme condescension* of the ministers of his *Britannic Majesty* in promulgating a manifesto addressed to the people of *France*, ought to excite in them the liveliest sentiments of gratitude, and justly might they be charged with having lost sight of their ancient character for politeness, were they for a moment to neglect making a suitable acknowledgement.

The people of *France*, unfortunately, deprived of those radiant beams of royalty they so long enjoyed, must feel inexpressible satisfaction on the extension of the refulgent rays from the surrounding thrones to their miserable country.

That the Kings of *Sardinia*, *Naples*, or *Prussia*, or the *Princes* of *Germany*, who possess but limited dominions, should thus extend their genial influence to other countries may possibly be accounted for from that spirit of beneficence which so universally resides in royal breasts, but that Her *Imperial Majesty* of all the *Russias*, or the ministers of his *Britannic Majesty*, whose dominions set geographical description at defiance, should thus condescend, is a work of supererogation which calls for the most prompt and fervent acknowledgments.

This *attention*, from the British Court, is more peculiarly pleasing from an apprehension entertained that we were deemed unworthy of its notice; its oracle, *Mr. Burke*, having loudly proclaimed that our country was not to be found:—" *That he could only see a vast chasm which once was France.*" As mankind are apt to feel contempt more forcibly than even injury, we were mortified to the extreme, at being thus unnoticed among nations. Apprehensive that thirty millions of people were to be lost to mankind, and necessitated to become solitary recluses, we were at length pleasingly gratified by having our national existence recognised, by the invasion of our country, if not by a confederacy

starve our women, and our children; and the British Court is, at last, so fully satisfied of our existence, as to address us in most pathetic exhortations, and avowed explanations of its motives and its views.

But, however we may be gratified by this gracious condescension, yet we cannot forbear to ask, whether this proceeding be not a little *mal a propos*? were the people of France *before* acquainted with the motives and views of the British Court? then was this manifesto not merely nugatory, but derogatory to its dignity, by *reiterating* those gracious offers which we had *before* despised. On the contrary, if these gracious offers *never* have been before made us, if we have been *hitherto* strangers to them, surely it might have been as proper to have reversed the order of proceeding, and have suffered these exhortations, these explanations of motives, to have *preceded* the operations of the armies.

Does this manifesto breathe a spirit of *reason* and *moderation*? If it be supposed that it may "*accelerate the return of peace,*" would it not have operated as powerfully to have *prevented the commencement of hostilities*? We surely should have been more disposed to receive beneficent advice, or candid expostulation, from a *friendly* than from an *hostile* hand. In the early stages of our revolution, we were naturally led to look on England with a *fraternal* eye; even the Hall of the Jacobins was ornamented with the *royal flag of England*. With pain we saw this disposition received, by the British Court, with *marked contempt*: yet still would not we abandon the hope that the *people*, nay a part of the *Cabinet of England*, was *friendly* to our cause; and the *concern* was at the least equal to the *indignation* with which we beheld the various gradations regularly take place, from *cool indifference* to *marked contempt*, to *malignant hatred*, to *insult*, to *menace*, to *hostile aspect*, and at last to *avowed aggression*. Endeavours to conciliate were returned with lofty tones of complaint, and offers of satisfaction sternly rejected, in words of ambiguity; or demands made with which it was known to be impossible we could comply.

Our extensive country could, from *conquest*, derive no advantage; she certainly supposed (whether true or falsely is not the question) that our newly acquired liberty would open to us sources of happiness, superior to our former government, or to the surrounding despotisms. *Interest*, then, would rather suggest to us the *exclusive possession*, than a *participation* of this happiness. Policy would prompt us rather to *rivet the fetters*, than to *break the chains*, of the slaves of the surrounding despots. We held out to the surrounding nations the *banner of universal peace*, and they, *political*, as well as *moral*, *obligation* calling on us to venerate it.

But, strongly as policy might call on us to adopt *peaceful* measures, equally strong did it prompt some of the sovereigns of Europe to pursue *hostile* ones; violently as they vociferated amongst their subjects that we were introducing disorder and misery into our happy country, yet well did they know that we were not injured any essential part of the political fabric; that, though we had levelled its gothic ornaments with the dust, yet had we left even the Corinthian capital of polished society unimpaired. Why should they have been so anxious to disturb, and introduce anarchy and disorder amongst us? If they had sown the germinating seeds of misery in our government, they might have left them to have matured; *such* a government, and *such* a nation, would have operated as a *warning* rather than an *example*. Had France exhibited the dreadful spectacle that in grasping liberty anarchy only was to be embraced; had the people of Europe beheld our lands lie uncultivated, because the farmer who planted the crop could not reap, or enjoy it; the merchant no longer brought his rich cargo to our ports, because our laws could not protect him in its disposal; or if the manufacturer declined to put his piece into the loom, from the apprehension of its being torn from it, by a licentious rabble; then would the surrounding slaves have mocked at our new fancied liberty, and have embraced their chains with pleasure; the people of *France* would not then have lavished their blood to resist the invaders of their land.

but with pleasure have submitted to any yoke ; well knowing none to be so dreadful as that from which they were delivered. The measures the despots have pursued, to bring misery on our land, is proof that they were convinced that their efforts were requisite to produce it. They knew that the rich harvest would proclaim, to surrounding nations, that our agriculture was emancipated from feudal and clerical claims. They knew that an equal system of law would pervade the nation, protecting and cherishing our manufactures and our commerce ; and that discord, removed by intire religious freedom, we should present a spectacle to the world as favorable to religion and morality, as the alliance between church and state had proved inimical. Hence the most powerful monarchs assembled their armies, and, with hostile aspect, hovered on our borders. With a monarch on the throne, and strangers to that *detestation* of *Kings* which we have since had good cause to cherish, we turned our eyes to his *Britannic Majesty* ; and, though we had no reason for supposing him peculiarly favorable to us, yet we solicited him to accept the office of mediator. If our proceedings were injurious to foreign nations, or dangerous to society, as is now asserted, why not then come forward to warn and to admonish ? Is it essential to regal dignity that advice must be obtruded and not solicited ? or must the manifestos of the British court be found only in the fields of war ? If as is now insinuated, the King of England was *friendly* to the constitution of 1789, let it be recollected *that* constitution then existed, and its friends who were predominant in the councils of France, would certainly have *coalesced* with the British court for its support. *They* at least did not wish the opposite parties the *mountain*, or the *violent* republicans to prevail ; nor did *they* wish to lose their lives at the guillotine, or waste them in Prussian prisons. But, if the British court, thus obstinately refused to interpose its mediation to prevent the *commencement* of hostilities, will they tell us on what principle, the moment the fate of *haver* had put some of the enemies towns in our pos-

session, they *then* came forward, complained that we had dared to beat our enemies, and demanded that we should relinquish our conquests, without even engaging that they should become the *price* of peace, and if their representations had any meaning, it was that in the midst of war we were to surrender up towns on the borders of our territories, that they might again become hostile posts, from whence the enemy might again pour out an armed banditti on our country. We do not ask whether such a proposition was ever acceded to? We demand if such an one was ever before made?

If the British ministers supposed that we did not *perfectly comprehend* the *extensive beneficence* of their designs, and it was deemed requisite to publish a manifesto to *explain* them, some might deem it an unpleasant circumstance, that the horrors of war should have been let loose upon us, without these explanations having *previously* taken place. Such has formerly been the practice of the nations of Europe, but the English have, ever since 1755, been charged with practising a new system, and to shew their courage, it is said, that, like an Italian bravo, they strike first and explain afterwards. Shall we suppose that, like the *heroes* of the *buskin*, they cannot open their mouths without a prelude of trumpets? or, that, like some of the Gods of our ancestors, they are only to be approached, and their will discovered, through the medium of *human* sacrifices? for it seems to be deemed requisite, that hundreds of thousands must lie gasping in the fields of death, ere the Court of London will condescend to explain itself, and villages filled with widows and orphans is the cheap price at which we are to purchase, from them, a manifesto, making known their sovereign will and pleasure. And it may be noticed that, fully as their motives are explained in this manifesto, yet the principal one remains unexplained, viz. the motive for now, and not till now, publishing them.

Do they, after being defeated in their views on conquering our fleets, obtain possession of them the name of Louis XVII. because they know the

such a being will never exist, and that, therefore, what is thus obtained will remain with them for ever? Possibly this manifesto, though it bears a foreign superscription, may be merely intended for the "good people of England?" Do they begin to feel the effects of war? Does John Bull begin to grumble, for want of plunder, processions and illuminations? Does the clamour of republicanism, and levelling begin to lose its effect? and is it become again requisite to invent something new to amuse the ignorant populace, and hold out to them the idea that France spurns the moderate and unambitious views of the British court? Or, perhaps, the curious manifesto results from the ill success of their fleets and armies, and from their now having no hope of dismembring our country and annihilating our existence as a people? To cover their disgrace, it may be desirable to intimate that the idea was never entertained. But we know that Valenciennes and Conde were seized in the name of the Emperor, and Dunkirk and Martinico summoned to surrender to the king of England. We also know, whether it be owing to French courage, or to English honour, that they are not now dissevered from our empire. And, however forward the English ministers may now be to proclaim, to the whole world, their objects in prosecuting this war, yet we cannot but recollect that, it is but a few months since they refused to avow and explain them, even to the very assembly who were to provide the means of carrying them into effect.

If this manifesto be a mere temporary expedient, for some political purpose, we shall naturally be induced to ask, "How long it is to be in force?" nearly a similar one of the Prince of Coburg's was in force four days. Whether this is to have a longer or a shorter operation those who issued it may possibly be ignorant. If it originated in the rout of the Duke of York before Dunkirk, it may already be terminated, by a recent success; and we may be even now employed in a task as nugatory and def-

picable, as refuting the memorials on the limits of Acadia.

But we do not apprehend that the British court will ever retract any promise contained in this manifesto, because we do not perceive that it contains any. The openhearted soldier, the Prince of Coburg, a stranger to the art of conducting a war of words, unfortunately, in his short manifesto, conveyed some meaning: it, therefore, became requisite to cancel it, and publish a new edition, matured in the English cabinet, amplified in words but destitute of meaning; and so admirably constructed is this excellent piece, that no event can possibly take place which can be deemed a violation. For instance, suppose "the well disposed inhabitants of France" should, like the Toulonese, "place confidence" in the British court, and deposit all our maritime provinces, our fleets, and our arsenals, in their hands; suppose that, when our nation is thus weakened, the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian armies should possess themselves of the remainder, rout the National Assembly, and guillotine the murderers of the King of France; is there any obligation that those who happen to be in possession of Rheims shall crown the little king? The Jacobins may have wickedly greased their boots with the holy oil, or some other weighty reason may occur for deferring the ceremony, and we may, possibly, be disappointed if we expect the allied powers to make us a king, and then march off to the respective places from whence they came, and leave the sceptre unimpaired in his hands. The king of England may say that he never engaged for others. He only expressed a "hope of finding in the other powers, engaged with him in the common cause, sentiments and views perfectly conformable to his own." That he cannot dictate to them, but that whenever they have restored the monarchy he is ready, with punctuality and good faith, to restore, even to an ounce of gunpowder, every thing in his possession; and, in the mean while, he only keeps them as a sacred deposit, until such a desirable event

shall take place. Again, suppose that, in pursuance of the kind admonitions, in this manifesto, we were of set about framing a government, and endeavour to adapt it to the taste of the British court: pray is there no danger of its becoming a little fastidious, when the approving our government is to be followed by refunding our ports, our fleets, and our arsenals? certainly such conduct would not be quite in the newest English fashion. St. Stephens chapel has refounded full as much with complaints of the injustice, and cruelty, exercised towards the princes, and other great personages of Indostan, as towards the king, queen, nobles and clergy of France; and has been for twenty years ^{accusing} ~~accusing~~ the culprits, but we have never yet heard that any reparation was ever proposed to be made to the injured. On the contrary, the countries, and revenues which had been voted to have been unjustly seized, from the native sovereigns, instead of being restored, were all partitioned between the company and the ^{state} ~~state~~, and the very money which had been resolved to have been infamously extorted, instead of being restored, is applied, without scruple, to the important purpose of hiring German ^{soldiers} ~~soldiers~~ to restore the French-^{men} ~~men~~ ^{army}. Supposing then this valuable purpose should be effected, and we should place little Capet upon the throne, may not the British court say, that though in the manifesto they insisted on our having a king, yet they had also insisted on our having a "stable" government, and, at present, it was possible we might change it? If a lapse of years should prove its "stability," we might then be told, it must also be a "legitimate" government; and, on an accurate investigation, they may possibly find some flaw; they may tell us they have heard that young Capet was introduced in a warming-pan, and they cannot think of restoring us our fleets until they see a Dutch Sooter-kin placed on the throne, by fourteen thousand foreign troops. And should we comply with this, we may then be informed, that they wondered at our assurance, in forming such unreasonable expectations, for that it had been particularly specified in the ma-

nifesto, that our government must be formed on "principles of universal justice," whereas our principles of government were so far from being universal, that they were dissonant to those of Japan, of Otaheite, and of Abyssinia.

The manifesto exults in the *confidence* which has been placed in the British government, by the people of *Toulon*. What sentiments of honour can prevail in a nation which can exult in such a — — ? Is it a cause of exultation that you have obtained possession of a fleet, at the expence of the blood of the wretched *Toulonnese*, who must inevitably fall a sacrifice to their enraged countrymen, and thus supply you with fresh sources of exclamation against that cruelty which some of us say you have incessantly laboured to excite ! Is it a cause of exultation, that you have obtained possession of their town, by holding out to them an idea that the British Court approved the limited monarchy of 1789 ? that very system which, even so late as January last, was, in Lord Auckland's memorial, stigmatised as "*a system of atrocity, surpassing all that ever sullied the page of history*," and that our "*folly and wickedness have, for four years, been introducing this system, from whence has flowed, in quick succession, the events which have since happened*." So accurate is your chronology, that you carefully stigmatize us as adopting a regular system of atrocity, from the first moment we deviated from our ancient despotism. That is the detested goal to which we are called upon to hasten. In vain we have looked to England for a kind, a fraternal hand, to lead us onward to peace, to liberty, to happiness. In the language of a *Burke*, and a *Calonne*, she strongly told us to tread back the steps we had taken ; and again kiss our chains. She told us this, because she abhors the thought that any other nation should taste the sweets of freedom ; and if a younger brother dares but to glance a look at the throne of liberty, behold, she prepares the bowstring

However diversified may have been the malign aspects of the British ministry, yet their true import never was equivocal ; they have uniformly pointed

towards us with deadly portent. They have indeed ventured to declare, in the face of Europe, that "*From the first period, when Louis XVI. called his people around him, for their common happiness, the king has uniformly shewn, by his conduct, the sincerity of his wishes, for the success of so difficult, but at the same time, so interesting an undertaking.* But they have forgot to inform us what was that conduct which proved the "*sincerity of the wishes, for the success of the difficult and interesting undertaking;*" and they also forget that it is only within their own territories that they have a right to be believed without evidence, or in opposition to indubitable testimony. But we will not call for the proof of *wishes* for the *success* of our difficult undertaking. We will be content with the least shadow of evidence, that the *wishes* were not uniformly *adverse*. We demand proof that the ballance ever hung for a single moment in *equilibrio*. The disposition of the British court was manifest, from the first dawn of the French revolution, from the first meeting of the National Assembly, when the principal, and most corrupt, member of the antient despotism fled from the justice, loaded with the spoils, of the country, and was received with open arms, caressed at the British court, and was supposed, in no small degree, to assist its counsels. It was manifest, when a wretch, who taken from among the swinish multitude, and placed in the legislative body, by aristocratic power, to assist it in seizing the helm of state, had been employed for a series of years in pouring out, on every branch of the legislature, every member of the executive power, and every act of state, torrents of insult, incompatible with good government, and the slenderest ideas of social order; and when the sovereign was in a situation which moved every heart to pity, and excited even in those who were inimical to his government, momentary effusions of loyalty and affection, he treated him with such base and degrading insult as by some it might have been imagined, no gentleman would have borne, and to which no good government ought to have suffered even a subordinate magistrate to have been exposed; yet no sooner did this wretch

begin to throw out his foul and slanderous abuse on the National Assembly, on its very formation, though the act of the sovereign, on every measure it had adopted, and on the constitution it had formed, than it proved so acceptable to the English court, so consonant to their ideas, that it instantly cancelled all his crimes, and he was received, caressed, and applauded, in a manner so remarkable as if not to degrade the character of the sovereign, yet, at least, to prove decidedly the disposition of the court.

Lord Auckland's memorial asserts that for four years they "*saw a new system of civil society forming in a great and neighbouring nation, overthrowing and destroying all the received notions of subordination, of manners, of religion. That property, liberty, safety, life itself, had been the sport of rage, of the spirit of rapine, of hatred, of ambition the most cruel, and the most unnatural.*" Is it to be believed, that the British court, for three years, were perfectly unconcerned? must we not infer, that from the first dawn of this nefarious system they took measures to prevent its effect; and that the open avowal of them did not originate in a French ship sailing up the Scheldt, or in the decapitation of the French King? In the early stages of the French revolution, it certainly did not appear to be necessary to adopt such vigorous measures as sending British fleets round Europe, to compel every nation (except Russia) to unite for the destruction of this system. It might then be deemed necessary merely for England to hold out to Europe, clear and unequivocal proofs of its real disposition, inspiring a confidence that a firm reliance might be made on her utmost exertions when they should become necessary. It was long before any of the other powers discovered that even *their* interference was necessary to subvert the new system. It was first hoped that the king, nobles, and clergy of France, aided by the private co-operation of the surrounding powers, might effect it. The next step was to assemble armies with hostile aspect on their borders, while the king of France, with his remaining prerogatives, was obstructing the new government, and (as was fully proved on his trial) em-

ploying the immense revenue they had assigned him, in spreading corruption through the new system, even from the leaders of the National Assembly to the lowest scribbling journalist. But at length, when the energy of the people justly deprived him of a power he had so grossly abused, and drove the nobility and clergy, from a country which they were, in conjunction with foreign powers, endeavouring to disturb; there then remained no hope of any effectual counter-revolutionary power existing in France, and, as Mr. *Burke* justly observed, it then became requisite that the power to effect this important change should be from *without*. But it did not even then appear to have become necessary that England should *openly* join the confederation of *Pilnitz*. Mr. *Burke* had depicted France as without resources, and her army without discipline; it was therefore confidently expected that the Duke of Brunswick, with a sword in one hand, and a manifesto in the other, would have been able, with ease, to effect the views of the august sovereigns. It then seemed to be as unnecessary for *England* to assist openly in the dismemberment of *France*, as in that of *Poland*; and *Hanover* seemed to have a fair prospect of being secured from their dangerous contagion. But the unexpected termination of that campaign rendered the active and open co-operation of England indispensable. Or alas! the quiet establishment of a stable government might unfortunately have taken place, notwithstanding the laudable endeavour which had been made to prevent it; and, as *France* had offered to coalesce with any other free people, for mutual support, there was danger of *Poland's* confederating with them, for so detestable a purpose; and, dreadful to think of, what must then have become of *Hanover*, and the three hundred other sovereignties of Germany, when thus placed between two free republics! a cry of daggers and king-killing was now become necessary, and republicanism and levelling, was echoed through your land. You launched into the war *a la mode Angloise*, and now hold forth to us an idea that you are invading and desolating our country, to restore that very con-

stitution of 1789, which such indefatigable pains have been taken to subvert.

But we have taken unnecessary pains, to prove the share you have taken in the calamities of France; those who are acquainted with the history of Europe, since your revolution; those who are acquainted with your constant interference, in every event, in every country, from the partitions of the Spanish monarchy to the dispute about a Turkish fortress, will not easily believe that these busy meddlers took no part in our affairs, and stood by, for three years, idle spectators of such an important event. No; they will say, prove the dispositions, the wishes of the English court, and you, at the same time, prove, that "it exerted itself, as far as was in its power, or as the apparent exigencies at the time called for, to effectuate those wishes, and to act consonantly to that disposition." Nay, had the British court professed to this moment a strict neutrality, had the most piercing eye been unable to discover the least traces of its interference in our affairs, we should only have inferred, that they had been conducted in profound secrecy, and that they were of a nature becoming the darkness in which they were enveloped.

The share which a cabinet takes in any transaction, is not to be judged of by the open and avowed part it may adopt, under the cover of neutrality, effectual measures may be pursued, when hostile ones may not be expedient. So England stood by with affected unconcern, for almost four years, a calm spectator of the important events which have taken place in France; so, with a similar neutrality, has she beheld the dismemberment of Poland, and the extirpation of liberty from that country, and had the Duke of Brunswick been as successful in the one country as the Russian armies were in the other, it might still have been asserted that England had been perfectly neuter; they might even have denied ever having acceded to the confederation of Pilnitz. The share England has latterly had in the dismemberment of Poland, it may be difficult to ascertain. That it originated in the English cabinet, might,

perhaps never have been surmised, had not a little fracas taken place between two and three years since. The first project respecting Poland was to dismember it of its sea-ports, and thereby render it dependent on those who possessed them. Poland successfully resisted the demand, as the powers who made it were inadequate to the task of enforcing a compliance. As every unsuccessful attempt on the rights of others is attended with odium, even as successful ones are generally accompanied with eclat; so the court of Prussia, desirous of removing the odium from itself, published a manifesto "contradicting the reports" as false as they are industriously circulated with "equal impudence and artfulness, relating to the acquisition of Dantzic, and other views in regard to Poland. On the contrary it is certain Mr. Hailes, the British envoy at Warsaw, has employed every means in his power to bring about a treaty, the basis of which was to be a cession of Dantzic. But the court of Berlin has been entirely passive in this transaction." The dismemberment of Poland may not have taken place exactly according to the mode projected by the British ministry; they may have proved unable to ride in the tempest and direct the storm. Such a power as England may assist in forming plans, giving an impetus to political operations, while more powerful nations will assume the reins and convert them to their own ends. The Polish canvas may have been prepared by England: but the masterly hand of Russia finishes the design.

However successful England may have been in partitioning the Mysore, yet her success in dismembering European nations has not been remarkable; the glorious and immortal King William did not perfectly succeed in his admirable plans for partitioning and disposing of the Spanish monarchy; the event proved his wisdom to be almost equal to his virtue. Let England then be comforted by the reflection, that even had the design of dismembering France succeeded, it might have terminated as dissonantly to any plan she might have projected as the dismemberment of Poland. English manifestos, and

declarations, might have but little weight with the great powers engaged in the present contest, and the hope his Britannic majesty now expresses "of finding in the other powers sentiments and views perfectly conformable to his own," may happen to be delusive. His majesty has communicated to Holland his declaration, and, notwithstanding the strict connection between them, the sentiments do not seem exactly to correspond. The Dutch do not seem like the king of England, to insist on the establishment of an "hereditary monarchy," as absolutely indispensable; but they declare they engaged in the war for the purpose of obtaining indemnity, and satisfaction, though the king of England proposes only "equitable and moderate conditions, not such as the expences, the risks, and the sacrifices of war might justify." The people of France, not to be behind hand in generous offers, will engage that whenever they establish an "hereditary monarchical government," to oblige the king of England, they will gratify their high mightinesses, the Dutch, by giving them a full indemnity for all their expences. After the decided proof of the disposition of the British court, as adverse to the reform of the French government, manifested by every act, nay confirmed and acknowledged by themselves, in Lord Auckland's memorial, can it be believed, that the constitution of 1789 is meant to be restored? Can we believe they really lament that "the designs which had been professed, of reforming the abuses of the government of France, of establishing personal liberty, and the rights of property, on a solid foundation, of securing to an extensive and populous country, the benefit of a wise legislation, and an equitable and mild administration of its laws, all these salutary views have unfortunately perished." Are we to believe that they deem it unfortunate, that these views have vanished, who, though in strict alliance with the old government, yet from the first formation of the new, not only refused all alliance to give it support, all mediation with its enemies to protect it from overthrow, and have since stigmatized

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On the Excellence of the BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

AMONGST the numerous positions which we transmit from age to age as indubitable truths, the excellence of the British Constitution is the most memorable, and it is supposed as little to require proof or illustration, as that the Sun warms, or that cold freezes. It will hardly be imagined that I mean to shock my Readers by disputing what is so universally admitted, yet I must own, that I have no better reason for admitting its truth, than the common adage, that "What every body says must be true."—Greatly mortified that I should possess such an inferiority of intellect as to be incapable of obtaining the slenderest idea on a subject which was said to be so extremely obvious, still more did I feel my degradation when, on a recent alarm, the whole nation were impanelled as a Jury, by Royal Proclamation, to give their verdict on *our excellent Constitution*; and to complete my mortification, a West India *Negro*, in my neighbourhood, signed his attestation to the excellence of our *well balanced Constitution*, and his resolution to defend it against Republicans and Levellers, whilst, alas! I was unable to discover what this Constitution was, or wherein its excellence consisted.

If by the term British Constitution were merely meant the mode in which the existing British Government was constituted, or what were its constituent parts, that certainly might be easily ascertained by an examination of the Government itself; but the sense in which the term British Constitution is

generally used, certainly implies something very different from the frame or Constitution of the existing Government; because nothing is more common than to consider the existing Government as having departed from the Constitution, even as being constituted in a manner hostile to the *spirit* of the Constitution; and our patriots are continually calling on us to carry back our Constitution to its first principles, to rub off the few specks and blemishes which the lapse of time has produced, and *thus* to restore the Constitution to its original perfection.

This custom of speaking of the Constitution as the foundation and origin of Government, has authorised Mr. *Paine* to call on us to produce it, to tell us where it was to be found, and when, and by whom, it was framed; and, as this is impossible, he advises us to dissolve our Government, and then form a Constitution on which a Government may be reared.

However naturally these inferences of Mr. *Paine's* may result from the premises we have furnished him, yet neither the one nor the other am I disposed to admit. Of a constitution I neither know, nor am anxious to know any thing. If, on examining the existing Government, it appears to be so constituted as to answer, in a tolerable degree, its proper purposes, it becomes intitled to our support; and even though it may possess great and essential defects, yet may it be suffered to remain undisturbed, if the remedy threatens greater evils than those which already exist. and if a licentious populace be induced to submit to the restraints of Government by tales of a *well balanced Constitution*, the wonder and the envy of the universe, in such case let us view the despicable delusion with silent contempt: but if ever it should be employed for the purpose of inflaming an haughty people, prompting them to insult, and to injure other nations, it then becomes us to draw aside the veil, and point out the dangerous deception. While Don Quixote is content to wander in the woods, let him with impunity indulge his frantic fancy with the imaginary charms of his peerless Dulcinea; but when

he comes forth and intrudes his vagaries on mankind, rendering them a source of outrage and of insult, it then becomes necessary to notice his error, strip his dowdy of her imaginary charms, and point out her filth and her deformity.

The whimsical imagination of the Knight of La Mancha never depicted his homely mistress in more superlative, and more numerous perfections, than the Englishman does the Constitution of his country. He tells us, that it was formed by the deliberative wisdom of his ancestors, who bled in the field and died on the scaffold to preserve the inestimable gem pure and un sullied ; and, transmitted through a succession of ages, it is bequeathed to us as a precious trust to be handed down unimpaired to posterity. Of this pompous detail never have I yet been able to discover the least trait. In reviewing the annals of our country, we have to review a succession of barbarous ages, distinguished by manners, and abounding with events correspondently savage. Could we have discovered that a Government, even of a tolerable nature, had ever been formed by such barbarians, it would, indeed, have been a remarkable circumstance, worthy of discussion and elucidation. To what period of our history are we to look, to what historian are we to resort, to discover our wise ancestors assembled to exercise their deliberative wisdom, by framing a Constitution which was to remain hundreds, or thousands of years, the wonder, and the envy, of the universe. As genuine history is totally silent as to this memorable event, shall we resort to fabulous ages? Shall we suppose that Brutus made us the invaluable present? Or, shall we consult GEOFFREY, or NINNIUS, whether ARTHUR, and his Knights of the Round Table, framed this monument of human wisdom! We may, indeed, imagine that CÆSAR's envy induced him to leave unnoticed this excellent Constitution, or policy might prompt the omission, lest the splendid spectacle should spread discontent amongst the Roman people. If it had no existence when Cæsar invaded the

island, was it brought amongst us by Danish, or Saxon pirates? Did they plunder and conquer us, and then generously present us with a free Constitution? These savage plunderers, wherever they inundated, certainly possessed, in no small degree, that species of liberty which consists in an exemption from the restraints of law, and government; but this liberty they kept to themselves. The subjugated people became slaves, or vassals, to the conquerors, and were parcelled out among their chiefs. These chiefs were so lawless that we find one of their Dukes, after having for years disturbed the nation with his piracies and robberies, sat down quietly to enjoy the spoils; and so destitute was the nation of government that none dared to call him to account. And a vassal's running away, or betraying his Lord, was the only capital offence in all the diversified codes of the Saxon princes. Pompous accounts have been given of *Alfred's* body of laws. As not a single vestige of them remains, we may certainly ascribe to it every imaginary excellence. To *Charlemagne's* laws have the old chronicles equally ascribed perfection; they, however, exist, to falsify the ascription. *Mr. Gibbon* has carefully examined them; he describes them as chiefly local, and petty regulations, totally undeserving the character of a general system of law, or government. *Alfred* and *Charlemagne* may have deserved praise from their contemporaries, and they, in transmitting praise, may with it have combined fiction: but, even admitting the most exaggerated accounts, it does not appear that the laws of *Alfred* have a claim to a superior degree of merit than *Mr. Gibbon* has ascribed to those of *Charlemagne*. One of the best of our historians observes, that nothing has been discovered which proves them to deserve the title of a complete body of laws; that, so far from bearing any resemblance to a system of government, those of which we have accounts seem to relate merely to private injuries, punished chiefly by fine, and regulated not merely by the nature of the injury but by the *rank* of the parties. Some of the most

severe punishments we find to be amputation of the right hand for sacrilege, cutting out the tongue for spreading false rumors, and castration if a vassal ravished a fellow vassal; but if it was done by the Lord it seems to have been deemed as insignificant an offence as it is now in our West India Islands. Like them, offences against the Lord was put on a level with those against the King, and punished as rebellion, with loss of life and goods. Most offences were punished with fines, which, if the offender was unable to pay, himself, wife, and children, were condemned to slavery. So far from the Government bearing the least resemblance to any modern form, none but those who composed the Wittenagemot possessed the least share in the Government; and so late as the year 1045, one of the blood royal could not be admitted to a seat in the Great Council of the nation, because he had not 40 hides of land, and when possessed of them, he was entitled to take his seat. For many centuries afterwards the term *free-man* was applied only to those who held lands immediately from the King; and, both before and after the Conquest, the revenues and authority of the sovereign were derived chiefly from the crown lands, and the nature of the tenures under which they were held. It appears from Doomsday Book that the Conqueror held 1400 manors, which had been possessed by Edward the Confessor. The addition made to them by the forfeitures of Harold's adherents, and probably the change from allodial to military tenures, occasioned the great increase of the royal power after the Conquest, and as the succeeding monarchs parted with their lands, their power decreased, until at last the Barons extorted from *John*, and afterwards purchased of *Henry*, the celebrated *Magna Charta*: but, however celebrated it may have been, it will not be easy to trace in it the least feature of the present Government of England; it contains merely concessions and regulations concerning a system which succeeding events have totally destroyed, and which those events would have equally destroyed, had *Magna Charta* never

existed. There does not even appear any ground to suppose that this charter had the most accidental effect in producing the present Government, which may evidently be traced to causes even of an opposite nature. The object of this charter was to increase, and secure, the authority of the Clergy, and Barons; hardly a syllable is to be found which improved the liberty of any other class of the community. The former immunities of privileged cities are indeed mentioned, and the Lords villains are protected from the King on the same principle as the West India slaves are protected by their owners. However much we may boast of this palladium of our liberties, there is only one passage in it which is ever mentioned. We are frequently told of the 29th chapter, that "No *freeman* shall be taken, imprisoned, &c. but by lawful judgment of his peers." But let us recollect that this was a special grant to a privileged order of men; for the term *freemen* then meant merely the greater landholders. So much were, what we term, the *people*, then out of the contemplation of law and government, that the word *people* is used by the historians of those times to describe an assembly of the great lay landholders, and are so called to distinguish them from the Bishops and Abbots. So extremely few were those who were intitled to the appellation of freemen, or were frequently described by the term *people*, that we often read of their all meeting together in one place, and personally giving their consent. Above all, it must be recollected that this charter has not a syllable respecting *parliaments*, *standing armies*, *rights of taxation*, or any of those important points which are now supposed to constitute the most material branches of the Constitution.

So far is *Magna Charta* from ascertaining, or securing, our liberties, that our present freedom could never have taken place, or the Government have existed in its present state, had this law been inviolably preserved; its subversion, not its preservation, is the foundation of that degree of happi-

ness which we enjoy. Had the Clergy, and the Barons, still preserved those immunities, and those privileges, which it was the sole object of Magna Charta to secure to them, little reason should we have had to boast of liberty. The oppression and misery of most of the nations of Europe result from those privileges having been retained; and the superior happiness England enjoys is because here they have been trampled under foot. And it is to the circumstances which effected this, that we are to look for the origin of the modern British Government. The Barons were in some degree weakened by the crusades, but still more by their bloody domestic feuds. Possessed of that property, and of that power, which they had obtained from the sovereigns; to make and unmake Kings, was, for a series of years, the sole occupation of these barbarians, one of whom obtained the nickname of the *King maker*. In the revolutions which these adventures produced, proscriptions and forfeitures weakened the Barons, and increased the power of the Crown, which enabled Richard III, Henry VII and VIII, totally to subjugate them, and annihilate their power. The last monarch having also, fortunately, quarrelled with the Court of Rome, seized the property of the Clergy, thus uniting in himself all those different sources of power, ecclesiastical and civil, which had hitherto oppressed and distracted the kingdom: and these three sovereigns, but particularly the last, possessed the most unlimited, uncontrolled power, which had ever been enjoyed in this nation, and this power was possessed almost unimpaired by his tyrannic daughter *Elizabeth*: but great and unlimited as was this power, the means by which it had been obtained insured its speedy subversion.

However terrible, and however odious, the uncontrolled despotism of an individual may appear, yet will the injury resulting to the community be far short of what arises from divided, contending authority, and diversified, numerous, subordinate despotisms. In the first case, the effects may be dreadful

on particular individuals ; but the great body of the people will be farther removed from, and less exposed to, material oppression, than when numbers of despots are dispersed over a land, each exercising his tyrannic power on a particular spot, and spreading misery and desolation all around him. Such were formerly the nobility and clergy of this, and of all the other nations of Europe ; and such are they in many of them at the present day.

The increasing prosperity of England, under the tyrannic Tudors, illustrates this position ; and the event proved, that as their power was not extremely baneful, so neither could such a domination be permanent. No sooner had it attained its summit, than it naturally fell into ruins. The people, delivered from the tyrannic power of the Nobles and Clergy, quickly rose in wealth and importance : but from the situation in which they had hitherto been, they do not appear to have had any idea of assuming, or claiming, any share in the Government. They seem to have been content to give their weight to a body which was but of modern origin, and hitherto of inconsiderable, but, in consequence of the changes which had taken place, of increasing importance. This body, though it owed its existence to the Crown, yet, by calling itself the *Representative of the People*, speedily acquired such strength as to substitute their own authority in the place of that of the Crown ; and it is only in tracing the rise and progress of this innovating authority, that the nature of the British Government can be understood,

Whatever may be alleged of the balance of our Government, yet no one can pretend but that the House of Commons is now the principal branch of legislative authority, and that its control over the executive is so supreme as to render it little more than the administrator of its will. Whatever real power the King and Lords possess, is generally attributed to their influence in the Commons. The necessity of resorting to such a support, proves their inferiority, and the ancient Prerogatives of the Crown be-

ing either dormant, or exercised under the awe, or control, of the House of Commons, proves this change of the Government from the increased authority of that House, however much, or improperly, its conduct may be under influence.

That we should talk of the antiquity of the British Government, when the essential, principal, and controlling branch of it is of modern origin; of its stability, when in every successive age it assumes a varied aspect; and that we should boast of a balance, between parts which have been perpetually changing, is not extraordinary, as the advocate of every party, and of every opinion, can never be at a loss, in such an heterogenous mass, to find something to colour the most extravagant positions. In one sense, at least, may the British Constitution be termed excellent, as, in its varied changes, it presents admirable sources of disputation, and to them can the champions of the most discordant opinions equally appeal. If those who wish to force themselves into place, by disturbing Government, call on the people to assume the reins, and if, when the outcry has effected its object, they wish to suppress their former declarations, and introduce foreign troops to maintain their authority, they can allege that both the one and the other of these measures are equally conformable to our excellent Constitution.

It is something amusing to see with what dexterity the Whigs can discover the traces of a modern House of Commons, nay, of equal representation, in antient periods, when the whole body of the People were trodden under foot by the King, Barons, and Clergy; and, as the history of the period from the Conquest to Magna Charta is extremely destitute of information, as to the nature of the Government, there is the greater scope for our imagination; and some have ventured to suppose that, however silent history may be on the subject, yet popular representative assemblies then held a share in the Government. That when imagination is let loose any thing may be supposed, and where history is defective, we should sup-

ply the chasm to our respective tastes, is not unnatural ; yet if, when the House of Commons is first to be traced in our records of legislation, it was neither powerful nor popular, it might have been rather inferred, that when it was not noticed it was because it either had no existence, or was so inconsiderable in its nature, and functions, as to be beneath the pen of the historian.

When *Magna Charta* originated, it was on the claim of the Barons, and the Clergy, and on the grant of the King ; no House of Commons is then stated to have had any share in the transaction, nor is there any provision concerning it. The statutes of Henry the 1st, are merely acts of royal authority. Those of Edward 1st sometimes mention the assent of the Prelates, and Barons, sometimes in the presence of them. The statute of *Quo Warranto* is stated to be of his special grace, and for the affection he beareth unto his Prelates, Earls, and Barons, and other of his realm ; and, though there exist lists of Members returned the 23^d, 25th, and 26th years of his reign, yet are they totally unnoticed in the statutes, as giving any assent. Indeed, it seems to have been customary for persons to attend national councils merely to know what was transacted. *Hincmar* mentions that, " At one of the general councils of the Chief Nobility of France, the Lesser Nobility also attended to receive their instructions, and to give their advice, but not to decide." In Edward 1st's numerous laws, the *advice*, rather than *assent*, even of the Barons, seems to be stated ; the 35th says, " By the council of his Earls, Barons, great Men, and other Nobles of his Kingdom." The 1st Edward 1st is stated to be " At the *request* of the Commonalty of his Realm, by their petition, made before him and his Council in the Parliament, and by the assent of the Prelates, Earls, Barons, and other Great Men ;" and in the 9th, " The said Knights, Citizens, and Burgeses, desired for them, and the Commons desired our said Lord the King, in his said Parliament, by their petition." In the 10th, " By the assent of the said

Prelates, Earls, Barons, and other Nobles of this Realm, and at the *request* of the said Knights and Commons." In the reigns of Henry IV, V, and VI, and as late as 1482, the Acts of Parliament are stated to be "with the *assent* of the Lords Spiritual, and Temporal, and at the *request* of his Commons;" and the statutes of Richard III, in 1483, state, that "the King hath ordained, by the advice and assent of the Lords Spiritual, and Temporal, and at the *request* of the Commons, summoned to the said Parliament." It was in the reign of Henry VII, that we first find the modern form of enacting, "by the *assent* of the Lords Spiritual, and Temporal, and Commons, in the said Parliament, and by authority of the same." Probably, this innovation arose from the desire of Henry to strengthen his defective title; and to this circumstance may we attribute the origin of that very authority of the House of Commons, which, within a century afterwards, began to contend with the power of the sovereign, and, in another half century, totally subverted it.

As the regular legislative power of the House of Commons is thus founded on modern innovation, so, also is its present nature, and formation. Until the time of Henry VIIIth, it consisted only of about 300 members, who were returned by such places as the King, by his writ, ordered; and in a list extant, London is not included. Even when the Members were returned, they were always liable to be excluded by the King, as the returns were judged of, not by the House of Commons, but by the Chancery, Exchequer, or Privy Council; and *Prynne* admits, that the King alone, or the King and the House of Lords, were originally the proper judges of the election of the Members of the House of Commons. In the reign of Henry IV, the Commons prayed the King, and Lords in Parliament, that a false return for Rutland might be examined in Parliament; whereupon the King commanded the Lords in Parliament to examine the matter—which seems to imply, both that the House of Commons did not

then consider themselves even as a part of the Parliament, and proves that they did not presume to judge of the returns of their own Members; and, arbitrary as the Tudors may have been deemed, it was under them that the House of Commons first possessed regular legislative authority, and rose to importance in the state.

Whatever temporary power Henry VII and VIII obtained, by the havoc they made with the Nobles and Clergy, yet they thereby laid the foundation for that subversion of the regal power, which their successors fatally experienced. Delivered from the dangerous power of the Barons, and Clergy, they were equally deprived of the benefit of their support, and their immense property, dispersed amongst the people, invigorated that commerce which soon after produced very visible effects. A landed interest existed independent of the Barons and Clergy; and a wealthy commercial body of men arose in consequence of the recent events; and those new classes of men, obtaining admission into the House of Commons, became troublesome even to Henry's own children. We find *Mary* under some difficulty in managing the rising power, and, she and her brother and sister *Elizabeth* introduced 130 new Members. This proved a temporary expedient, aggravating the evil, by introducing a greater number of opulent, and able men, into the House of Commons, increased its importance, enabled it, under the weak reign of *James*, to obtain such privileges, and power, as proved, in the succeeding reign, the destruction of the monarchy. That a body of men whose existence, and formation, were entirely dependent on the Crown, should, in the course of little more than a century, possess the Government, and trample under foot the antient authorities of the kingdom, may be easily accounted for under these circumstances. The House of Commons obtained, and have ever since retained their power, not from any antient or natural right to the Government, but because, from the nature of its constitution, men of wealth, influ-

ence, and ability, obtained seats in it, and when thus congregated together, were enabled to wrest from the King, Nobles, and Clergy, the small remnant of their power, and were equally enabled to assume it themselves. No scruples did they entertain as to the lawfulness of thus assuming power; nor do they appear to have entertained a thought of forming any rational system of Government, but grasped the whole of it themselves.

At what is called the Restoration, though antient names were retained, yet neither the King nor Parliament bore the least resemblance to those of former periods. The feudal rights of the Crown, from whence was derived the power and the revenues of our antient monarchs, had long been mouldering away, and the last vestige of it was annihilated immediately on the Restoration, and left the King dependent on the House of Commons, destitute of any acknowledged rights which he dared to exercise, and equally abject may he be deemed, whether we consider him as attempting to retain a little temporary power by dealing out his largesses amongst them, or, when those largesses failed, we view Ministers impeached, Government disorganized, and the detestable leaders of that detestable assembly plunging into such an abyss of crimes, that we can hardly surmise their purpose, unless it were the mere gratification of perpetrating them, while the astonished monarch was necessitated to follow them through perjury and murder, until emboldened by success, madness at length induced them to insist on the proscription and exclusion of his brother. The King was stimulated to resist the outrage by attempting to govern without a House of Commons, but reducing it to its former insignificance or original nothingness, was an attempt desperate and difficult. The Crown had lost its antient resources and support, the House of Lords, instead of being a body of powerful Barons, possessed of almost the whole property of the kingdom, and vested with legislative authority in consequence of that possession,

bore a much greater resemblance to Cromwell's *Other House*. The King, like Cromwell, could by his writ place whom he pleased among the Lords; but as then they had not found out the modern mode of preserving their influence by purchasing seats in the House of Commons, and placing in them their dependants, the House of Lords became perfectly insignificant, bullied and insulted by the Commons. To what period then of the British history do the advocates for the antiquity of our Government wish to refer us? In what age are we to find the pattern with which they wish us to compare it, and to which they will be content to look back, as the standard of perfection, for any one of the branches of our excellent Government? Do they wish the monarch to possess a large, independent, land revenue, with a numerous train of armed Barons, bound by their tenures to attend him in his wars? Do they wish him to be possessed of the rights of purveyance, and of wardship, with the valuable restriction of *Magna Charta*, as to the first, that "no demesne cart of any spiritual person, or Knight, or any Lord, shall be taken by our bailiffs;" or as to the latter, the no less notable privilege of the sixth chapter, that "heirs shall be married without disparagement;" or of the seventh, that widows "shall find surety that she shall not marry without our licence and assent, if she hold of us, nor without the assent of the Lord, if she hold of another?" Do we wish to see our House of Lords changed into Prelates, Abbots, and armed Barons, possessed of almost the whole property of the kingdom, holding the people on their estates in a state of vassalage, and possessing petty jurisdictions in their several domains? Or lastly, are we desirous of seeing our House of Commons changed into a handful of representatives of petty Barons and Landholders, lost in the great herd of powerful Barons? Or, when turned out of their company, formed into a Lower House without legislative authority, and attending on the Upper House merely to receive the law at their hands, and to present their humble petitions?

As the least resemblance to our present Government cannot be traced in our antient annals, so the idea of a balanced, mixed Government, consisting of three distinct parts, equally possessing legislative authority, is as fabulous. No antiquarian has yet discovered the existence of a separate House of Commons in the early periods of our history. So short was the period of their possessing a distinct portion of regular authority to their usurpation of the whole, that though it was the father of Henry VIII who first admitted them to this acknowledged regular share of legislative power, yet was his daughter necessitated to struggle against their increasing authority, and the son of her successor, overwhelmed by the torrent, was deprived by it both of his crown and his life.

As thus fabulous is the story of our glorious constitution being framed by the deliberative wisdom of our ancestors, it is no less so, that it was cemented by their blood: that they bled in the field, and died on the scaffold, to transmit to us unimpaired the invaluable blessing.—That our fields, and our scaffolds, have been deluged with blood, our annals too fatally prove; but, alas! it was all shed in the most detestable pursuits, or for the most frivolous objects, contests for power, capricious changes of government, and theological wrangles, were the admirable causes for which our wise and virtuous ancestors were anxious to bleed. They died in the field to deprive the monarch of the power of levying a trifling tax, and to place that power in a body who used it when possessed of it, to six times the extent. And whence did they derive the right of taxing and legislating, for themselves, and all the rest of the nation? How could the 130 members, who had been recently summoned to parliament by the children of Henry VIII, to answer their purposes, thence derive a right to tax, and to legislate? Could they possess an authority superior to that from which their own was derived? Or what pretence could they have for assuming the whole of that authority, a fourth share only of which they so recently possessed? For in Queen

Elizabeth's time, the clergy, in convocation, taxed themselves. Admitting then the people to have a right to change the government, and that they could not be taxed without their own consent, then may it be asked what pretence the Commons had for calling themselves the People of England, any more than any other corporate body had, who, like them, derived its powers, and constitution, from the Grant of the Crown? Will it be said, that the House of Commons represented the *people* of England? when even now, as is alleged, a few thousands return a majority of the members, and *lord North* justly observed that in every former age elections were far less popular, as well because the original number of members had been nearly doubled, as that the division of property, and increase of wealth, had introduced a great increase of voters. Will it be affirmed that they represented the *property* of the kingdom? Almost the whole property of the nation was formerly in the hands of the Clergy and Barons; and if subsequent events had greatly diminished it, yet probably the property of the House of Commons, or that of the small number who returned the majority of them, was far less considerable. Did they represent the land of the kingdom? That was formerly intirely in the hands of the Lords and Clergy; a great part is so still, and a great part of the remainder of the landed property is totally unrepresented. All copyhold interest, which is nearly equivalent to the value of the sole property, all leasehold and mortgage interest, which in many cases is far superior to that of the freehold, the whole city of London, both land and houses, is unrepresented, as well as all lands in the hands of corporate bodies, females, minors, and trustees.

If thus unfounded were the claims of those who usurped the power of the Crown in the last century, so were their purposes frequently indefinite. Who can tell what was the object for which *Ruffel* and *Sydney* contended? To exclude *James*, we shall be told. Admirably just to be sure; to deprive him of

Poor Richard's Scraps, No. 4.

Sold by M. GURNEY, No. 128, *Holborn-Hill.*

his crown, because he did not implicitly adopt the new fangled creed of the two or three preceeding monarchs, or because he was guilty of believing in the religion of his great Grandmother, and a long line of Ancestors! Did the persecuting wretches mean to hold it out, as a principle of Government, that to possess the rights to which we are born, conformity to a national religion is an indispensable condition? Or, was the monarch peculiarly to be marked out, to be deprived of the most important, and inherent right, a right which is equally important to the king, and to the peasant, that of worshipping God according to the dictates of his conscience? The assent, or dissent of the mind, is an involuntary act. The human intellect, in pursuit of truth, is liable to take an infinite diversity of paths. The lure of a crown may, indeed, induce the abandoned to falsify the convictions of the mind, but never can control them. And to make the profession of a particular religion the condition of enjoying an hereditary crown, perhaps, may, by some, be deemed something like saying that we wish to be governed by those who are so destitute of all religion as, for the sake of worldly advantage, to be willing to profess any. But, with respect to JAMES, such a conduct seems very extraordinary, he was the Monarch of three kingdoms: his Irish subjects (except the English and Scotch settlers) were firmly attached to the religion of the sovereign, so were the Highlands of Scotland; and in the Lowlands, as well as in England, the numbers were not inconsiderable. Admitting, then, that the religion of a monarch ought to conform to that of the majority of his subjects, yet will it be much easier to shew that his present majesty ought to become a Gentoo, or a Mahommedan, than that JAMES ought to have been of the Church of England. Was it incumbent on him to be of the religion of his more considerable

kingdom, England? The natural inference seems to be exactly the reverse. The weaker kingdoms was most exposed to the danger of having the religion of the more powerful one imposed on them; and, to guard against that danger, justice seemed rather to dictate that the common sovereign should not be of it. That Popery was a dangerous, bloody, persecuting religion, was no otherwise true, than as the assimilating religion with worldly power, and converting it into an engine of state, naturally renders it bloody, and persecuting. The Romish clergy possessed greater power, and existed during a period in which they were enabled, by the ignorance and superstition of mankind, to extend most widely that baneful power, which, in proportion to the existing circumstances, as conspicuously characterised the English Hierarchy, and the Scottish Presbytery.

Whatever panick may have been spread by fraud, or by folly, perhaps, it may not be easy to prove, that any danger to the community could possibly have resulted from the religion of *James*; perhaps, some may surmise that it was a circumstance peculiarly favorable. It was to the power of sovereigns that the claims of the court of Rome were peculiarly hostile. Those claims all the monarchs of Europe had, when in their power, uniformly opposed. *Louis xiv.* was, at that very period, in a state of hostility with the Holy See, and, however strongly *James* might be attached to the dogmas of the Romish Church, there was no ground to suppose that he was so destitute of the sentiments of a sovereign as voluntarily to subjugate himself to her domineering claims. And as the assumption of the Tiara, with the Imperial Crown, had increased the power of *Henry* and *Elizabeth*, so the separation was a weakening of the royal power, and favorable to the liberties of the people. Still more was it, also, in another point of view. It afforded the opponents of the court an opportunity of restricting, if they needed restriction, the prerogative of the crown. A *Carte Blanche* was offered them if they would have abandoned the Exclusion

Bill, and they had it in their power to have framed a constitution favourable to the people, which, under those circumstances, would have been gladly accepted by the crown, together with all the guards, which they could have possibly devised, to secure it against incroachments.

A militia might have been established, standing armies been annihilated, Place, Pension and Peerage Bills, might have been obtained, nay, annual Parliaments, and the *Duke of Richmond's* equal representation, would have been conceded. Shall we be told that *James* was so bad a prince that no restrictions could have protected us from the threatened mischief—No laws have been framed but what he would have trampled under foot—If the monarchical power was of such a nature, that the safe exercise of it could not be rendered secure, by any constitutional guards, by any legal restrictions; if all such must give way, and prove like *Sampson's* cords to a wicked prince, if the happiness and liberty of the people could not be secured by law, but must ultimately depend on the virtue of the monarch, that, indeed, would have been a powerful reason for abrogating the office, or for rendering it elective, but none for changing the Hereditary succession.

The most wicked, and the most dangerous, monarchs will be the most difficult to dispossess. Is it prudent, then, to subject the community to the certain evils of such a convulsion; to dispossess one monarch whose thread of life may be nearly run, and who might be succeeded by one of an opposite description, and to do this merely to introduce a new monarch, who if he appear to possess superior virtue, the appearances might be as deceitful as those of *Sixtus v.* or, if real, might be quickly terminated by his life, and the throne might then, possibly, descend to a worse monarch, and a worse line, than that which had been expelled?

But, in fact, the epithets of despotic, lawless, and cruel, were far from applicable to *Charles II.* and his brother. Had such been their character they

had more quietly possessed the throne. It was when *Charles II* was necessitated to trample on the domination of the Lower House of Parliament, that he best deserved, and, probably, most possessed, the law of his subjects; and in too readily giving way, in the early part of his reign, to such assemblies, his conduct seems most reprehensible. Gratitude and necessity might prompt him to submit to the claims of that assembly which had restored him, but all foreign conquests were solely subject to the Royal Will. *Lord Hardwicke* in 1722, and *Lord Mansfield* in 1774, declared that unless there are special treaties such conquered lands are, by law, the sole property of the crown, and the inhabitants, and their property, are all at the king's disposal. Had Charles, like some monarchs, been disposed to extend and avail himself of the prerogative of the crown, what an ample field was opened for securing, and extending its powers, and its influence? From hence might have been derived revenues. Here might have been maintained an army of foreign mercenaries, to keep the colonies in subjection, to awe the mother country, to secure an influence in her legislature, and to undertake new conquests in India, which would have rendered still more secure his domestic authority. But no sooner had he taken possession of his crown than he permitted, nay, sent orders to his governors to form provincial assemblies, which, mimicking the English House of Commons, reduced his authority to as despicable a state in the colonies as it was in England. Thus inattentive to preserve the authority, and prerogatives of the crown, no less so were these royal brothers to preserve the crown itself. Had *James* procured foreign territories, as depots for foreign troops, ready to be poured into England to suppress domestic rebellion, or foreign invasion; Had he formed treaties, and entered into confederacies, for foreign troops to defend him at home, while he sent his English troops abroad; Had he built barracks to prevent his soldiers from catching any popular contagion; Had he, in order to discover and

get rid of those who were adverse to his government, suffer his ministers to disseminate opinions to captivate the populace, and then imprison and transport those who adopted them; Had he known of, or chose to exercise those various prerogatives, which have since the Revolution, been fortunately discovered: Under these circumstances his throne would have been more permanent, nor would the courage, or the fatalism of the Prince of Orange have emboldened him to assail it, with fourteen thousand Dutch troops, even, though half a score factious Revolutionists had skulked into a Derbyshire hovel to invite him to the enterprize.

Sydney admits, that "*a just, wise, and valiant king is only a momentary help, his virtues end with him.*"—— Could such men be justified in attempting to exclude the reigning family merely to introduce a new line, even had they supposed that some individual of it possessed superior virtue? Had they so much made revolutions the order of the day, as to project them for what they themselves considered as, a mere *momentary help*? The danger which must have threatened us from introducing a Prince who possessed foreign territories and troops ought to have been weighed, and that the power of such a Prince threatened danger to the state. May it not be inferred, that if they meant by the exclusion to change the succession, it was because they wished for foreign assistance to enable themselves to maintain their aristocratic power, equally against the authority of the sovereign, and the rights of the people; or that the hoped such foreign Prince neither loving nor being beloved by the people, they themselves might possess, and exercise in the Royal Name, that power which they had wrested from their native monarchs? Stigmatising the people as a Democracy, applauding the vilest and most oppressive military aristocracies, speaking even of Poland and Germany as enviable systems of liberty; it is evident that these men had no intention of forming any improved or rational system of government, and that possessed of influence and power

in the lower House of Parliament, they meant in that Assembly to exercise all the functions of government.

In this view, it is evident, that the sole contest, both in the reigns of *Charles I.* and *II.* was, whether the lower House of Parliament should exercise the whole authority of the state? Imitating the stile of the ancient Barons, and our piratical invaders, they dared to call *themselves* the people of England; and, under the *guise* of that appellation, artfully advanced their own power, and undermined that of the crown; and, amidst all the disputes to which these contests have given rise, it is extraordinary that no one has ever yet condescended to undertake to prove, either that this body of men had a right to wrest from the crown the government of the country, or that such a transfer of it would have been beneficial to the people.

From the nature of such an Assembly it must, when in possession of the government, have possessed greater power than Kings could; and there does not appear any reason why they should be less disposed to abuse it. The experiment was tried: they did wrest the sceptre from the crown. Did they then, or did they not, exercise it more to the benefit of the people? Levying taxes is the most important and most delicate part of the administration of government,—the part which we peculiarly exult to have wrested from the crown, and which it is supposed to be so extremely important to keep peculiarly under the cognizance of the House of Commons. Well, this very House succeeded. They had the purse of the public totally at their disposal, for a series of years, without kings, bishops, or courtiers, to waste, to plunder, dilapidate it. What was the result? The extravagant, despotic monarch, *James I.*, paid all the expences of government, kept a splendid court, maintained an expensive war in Ireland, and laid the foundation of our navy, at the expence of half a million per annum; nor were all the levies of *Charles I.* much larger, though he greatly raised the navy, kept a magnificent court, had

splendid palaces, encouraged learning, and those elegant arts which adorn society, and which, under his auspices, distinguished this kingdom, yet under the authority of the Commonwealth was 83 millions levied in 19 years, a larger sum than the four *Stuarts* received in almost a century. *Sir John Sinclair* states, that "a considerable part of this immense treasure was either lavished by Parliament on its members, or was fraudulently embezzled," — that "committees of the House appropriated whatever sum they thought proper to their own use;" and that "by these frauds, the Parliament were disabled from paying the army, which was the principle source of *Cromwell's* exaltation." May not, then, the enormous power claimed, and exercised, by the House of Commons in the reigns of *Charles I.* and *II.* be deemed not merely an innovation, but an innovation dangerous and injurious, not only to the crown, but still more so to the people?

If a Democracy be so dangerous, and so detestable as is supposed: If the great body of the people were not to be admitted to any share in the government, If no new system of government was to be resorted to which, in its constitution, might be adapted to secure and regard the interests of the several parts of the community, and the public happiness, if any part or member of the old government was to assume the whole, or a predominant share, of power, or a controlling domination over the others, then is it proper to inquire whether the House of Commons had any pre-eminent claim? This point has been rather assumed, than proved.

Their power appeared to be greater than that of either of the other branches of the legislature, and they do not seem to have been less disposed to abuse it.— Besides their power seemed to be an increasing one, while that both of the Sovereign and the Lords was evidently decreasing. Surely the Monarchs, whose predecessors had possessed considerable power, could hardly be blamed that they beheld with reluctance the attempts made to wrest it from them, by a body

whose authority was but of recent origin, and who, within less than a century, had addressed their ancestors under the form of "*Your Majesty's poor and obedient Subjects and Commons.*" Had this Assembly confined their views within moderate bounds, they might have been useful to the community; and within such bounds the *Stuarts* seemed disposed to admit it. But if they dispensed to them with such parsimony that property of the public which when it was at their own disposal, they lavished with such shameful prodigality, is it extraordinary, that our kings should have attempted to govern without them? They might, possibly, think that they had, at least, as good a right to the whole Government.

Under their reigns the agriculture of the country had rapidly increased, and commerce swelled to such a comparative extent, that the customs, under them, were risen to near ten times the amount as at any former period; a navy was formed which may excite our astonishment, when we consider the trifling taxes they received, and compare them with modern expenditures.

Charles and his brother, considering how much their government was disturbed, appeared to pay great attention to the manufactures and prosperity of the kingdom; the reception they gave to the French Protestants proves this, as well as the liberality of their minds, and their disposition towards universal liberty of conscience.

May not then some think, that it might have been beneficial to the nation had they been less disturbed by the factious claims of the violent leaders in Parliament? May it not be said, that the increasing wealth and prosperity of the People would have formed a sufficient check to the feeble power of the crown, until the people becoming more enlightened would have at length assumed the power, and formed a government on a popular principle, in a degree, proportionate to the knowledge and improved state of mankind? at least they may say, the power of such a King would have been much easier checked and con-

trolled by the people than either, a House of Commons possessed of independent power, Or if, under colour of a mixed government, it should virtually exercise the prerogatives of the crown, or if, under pretence of controlling it they should really sanction, and give uncontrolled power to a King. Such a coalesced power they will say, may be far more terrific than the sceptre of a *Stuart*.—That the levying taxes may be more safely trusted to a House of Commons because in taxing the people they must tax themselves may not appear perfectly satisfactory to some; they may ask, if it be not possible to reimburse to themselves that share of the taxes which they pay in common with the people.

If it be supposed that *Sydney*, &c. meant to adopt some kind of mixed government, yet, may it be asked, whether past experience had not proved its impracticability? had not the contests of the King, Barons, Clergy, and Lower House of Parliament uniformly been for the purpose of grasping the whole power, and to repress their rivals: could any period be referred to wherein they appeared disposed to acquiesce in an equal partition of power, and it may be asked, if in the nature of things, such a disposition is to be expected; though the weakest may, indeed, contend for such a partition, with a view to depress others. Could it reasonably be expected that those who have attained power will impartially divide and distribute it? Will they separate the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, and leave them independently and uncontrolled to exercise their respective functions? Is it practicable for the legislative functions to be divided into parts, to be exercised by different bodies, each possessing equally distinct legislative power, independent and secure from each other's control. I say secure from each other's control, because, unless they act independently, and uncontrolled, the mixed authority becomes merely nominal, the real power is in the controlling body, and if the others, are more than nominal, it must be liable to convulse and disturb the government.

That these men had an intention of forming an improved system of national representation is not pretended; they were of ancient families, the *esprit du corps* actuated them; and Sydney's hatred of Kings and contempt of modern Lords were as conspicuous as his attachment to ancient aristocracy; such, he says, were not such Lords as *Hyde, Arlington, &c.* but the families of ancient descent, such as the *Hamdens, Pelhams, &c.* such, says he, "were termed the people, from whom all power originated, and from amongst whom Kings were chosen." A Democratic government, he says, "never was, except in such a place as *Marino*, where a hundred clowns govern a barbarous rock that no man invades."—"That those governments, in which Democracy prevail, do more frequently err in the means of preserving purity of manners, I confess." "The best, and wisest men, amongst the Greeks, and Romans, did incline to Aristocracy."—"In all the legal governments of the North, the strength of the government has always been placed in the Nobility; and no better defence has been found against the encroachments of ill Kings, than by setting up an order of men who by holding large territories, and having great numbers of *Tenants* and *Dependants*, might be able to restrain the exorbitancies of either the King, or the Commons." (By Commons he means common people, not the House of Commons.)—But it was not merely *Aristocracy*, but a *Military Aristocracy* for which he contended. He reprobates the Venetian Aristocracy for relying on *Trade*; and asserts that "The best judges have always given the preference to those Constitutions that principally intend *War*, and make use of *Trade* as assisting to *that end*, and think it better to aim at *conquest* rather than simply stand on their *defence*." *Tyrrell* admits that the common people never had any concern in the government.—*Fletcher*, a contemporary Whigg, has so strong a predilection for the antient aristocratic government, as modestly to propose that the common people should be sold as slaves, as a convenient mode of providing for them, and to increase the wealth and power of the

Aristocracy; and *Mr. Locke*, in his celebrated treatise on Government, attempts to defend the lawfulness of holding a whole body of People in Slavery! or, as he chooses to call it, *Servitude*; and actually drew up a code of Laws designed for an infant colony of which slavery formed a considerable part.

Such being the principles of those *old Whiggs*, whom *Mr. Burke*, with great propriety, claims as his Allies, we may concur with the Whigg Clubb in celebrating the circumstance that they bled upon the scaffold; and had their opinions perished with them we should not have been inconsolable for the loss. Had these men, instead of perishing on the scaffold, been successful in their projects, What would have been the result we have no documents to prove. Deep, ambiguous designs of dark ambition, have, indeed, been discovered, and these celebrated discourses, drawn from the recesses of the closet, may in some degree, tend to elucidate their nature; and lead us to think it was intended to fill up the design which the bold pen of their leader had sketched out.

To preserve the form of the existing government was, probably, their intention, as it was not ill suited to be moulded to their purpose. To exclude the Heir to the Crown, if not the reigning Monarch, was essential to their plan, in proportion as he was beloved by the people, and attached to their interest.— A foreign Prince, remotely allied to the Crown, who could have no hope but through them of ever possessing it, was the *King* best suited to their purpose; such an one might become a tool in their hands, or an accomplice in their designs. If destitute of the love of the people he must become the more dependent on them. If he hated the people, whom he nominally governed, then would he not scruple assisting in their purposes. His foreign troops, and foreign alliances, might aid them against the people, while ignorant of the nature of our Government, and engaged in foreign concerns, he must have been disposed to leave the management of English affairs in their hands; and they, by involving the Nation in perpe-

tual foreign wars, would be effecting the various ends, of establishing such a military aristocracy as they appeared to have in view, of gratifying the Monarch, by enabling him to enlarge and strengthen his foreign dominions, which would always be a source from whence troops might be poured into the nation, to support their power, and quell discontent, enabling them (as *Sydney* expresses it) "*To aim at foreign conquest rather than simply stand on their defence;*" and these foreign conquests might have opened a trade exactly of such a nature as he describes, "*A Trade assisting to the end of War.*" The genius of this military aristocracy was not, it seems, to be contaminated by fair and lawful commerce: but *Locke's* slavery, and *Sydney's* War and Conquest were to have constituted its essence, and so combined, might have become a powerful and complicated machinery for enabling them to govern the whole empire.

The infant colonies, which the unambitious *Stuarts* possessed, might, by the conquests of this military aristocracy, have been widely extended through both Indies, until the plundered millions were poured into England, still strengthening the aristocratic power, by raising powerful bodies, and descriptions of men, who would have been necessitated to support that system of Government which was the source of their unjust power, and criminal wealth. From the contempt with which *Sydney* speaks of the House of Lords, it may be imagined that the House of Commons was intended to have been the focus of this power; for though *Sydney* speaks of an aristocracy aweing both the King and Commons, yet it was evidently the Common People he meant, as the House of Commons was their favourite scene of action.— The House of Lords might have been continued to preserve an appearance of the former Government, and as a sort of dignified retreat for the political champions when they retired from the fierce contests in St. Stephen's Chapel, but there might have cen-

tered, in reality, the whole legislative, executive, and even, judicial power of the State.

The King might have continued, as a matter of form, to assent to Bills; but it might have been stigmatised as an obsolete prerogative; they might have dared him to exercise it, and we might have heard it avowed, that the House of Lords would hardly venture repeatedly to refuse a Bill which the Commons persisted in presenting to them.

So far from keeping the executive, and legislative, powers distinct, they might have claimed a controlling power, by which every act of the executive power might have been subjected to their will. We might have seen Ministers made, and unmade, on the mere intimation of their pleasure, and claiming the right of holding the public purse; they might have threatened to stop the wheels of Government, and disorder the fabric of the State, unless every measure of government was conducted in conformity to their wishes. Nor might the judicial power have escaped their grasp. By Impeachments, or Bills of pains and penalties, every individual might have been dragged before them, deprived of the right of trial by Jury; they might have trampled on all the rules of evidence, charged as crimes actions which no law had pronounced to be criminal, and, unrestrained by decency, as well as law, these processes might have been instituted for temporary, political, nay, interested purposes, and no man could, in such case, have been deemed safe who had incurred their displeasure.

Shall we reflect with satisfaction that such designs were stifled in embryo, and that we have never seen a body of men possessed of such power! for who can surmise to what extent it might have been carried? might not the most dangerous and mischievous prerogatives of the Crown have been revived, and enforced? and whether we suppose that, in such case, such an assembly were to be considered as the creatures of the crown, giving its sanction, and authorising the Crown to assume such alarming prerogatives, as without

such sanction it would not have ventured to claim; or whether the Monarch was to be considered as the tool by means of which the assembly, through, its instruments, exercised those prerogatives; yet the danger to the people must have been the same, as, in either case, such prerogatives would have been possessed by their united and concentrated powers as had been deemed dangerous when exercised only by one.

In this extended range of our history, from its earliest period until the Revolution in 1688, it does not, then, appear that any particular form, or principle, of Government can be stated as its characteristic.—We see nothing but a series of events, producing a vast variety of changes in the Government, so important, and so sudden, as, so far from suggesting the shadow of a pretext of there existing a regular permanent, well formed Government, it does not appear that such an one had ever even a momentary existence, as to which we can look back with regret, as having passed away, which can be referred to for our imitation, or as to which we can boast of our ancestors forming by their wisdom, or transmitting to us by their heroism.

If such a Government, now, exists, no higher origin can it claim than the passing century; and that period is alone entitled to claim all that wisdom, that virtue, and that heroism, which, with a lavish hand, we attribute to our ancestors. Whether the last 100 years is more intitled to this praise, than was its predecessors, is a question which, if at all, must be cautiously discussed. At 1688, the limitation of free inquiry terminates; from that happy period the pen of the Historian must move according to Acts of Parliament; and he who presumes to analyze subsequent events is appaled by the terror of the law!—The Government of our country, excellent as it is, dares not, it seems, to trust that excellence to examination; nor is it even thought prudent to suffer events, even after the intervention of a revolving century, to be abandoned to free inquiry, lest infer-

ences might be drawn unfavorable to the existing Government. Its own conduct, its own merits, is thought too narrow a foundation on which to rest its safety—Be it so—we submit to the indispensable condition; but, then, let them not vaunt in their triumph. Mr. *Dymock*, who throws down a gauntlet which no man dares take up, may exult in his safety, but has no ground to boast of his prowess. In obedience to law, then, we declare, we believe in the glorious Revolution, and in the immortal *William*; and, in discussing this glorious Revolution, we shall only venture to suggest a few doubts, and ask a few questions; at the same time, solemnly protesting that nothing which has been said extends, or shall be construed to extend to this glorious Revolution, or to any person, matter, or thing, subsequent to the date thereof.

As to this Revolution, let us first inquire as to the propriety of the term. We certainly do not apply it merely to the dethronement of one Monarch, and placing another on his vacant throne; nor even to the introduction of a new line of Kings. These are events to be traced in the history of every country, and frequently unconnected with any Revolution in its Government. The changes of the throne between the houses of *York* and *Lancaster*, even though they produced some accidental effects on the Government of the country, were, notwithstanding, never deemed Revolutions.

That a great Revolution has taken place in our Government since the reign of *Q. Elizabeth* cannot be disputed, but it was not in 1688 particularly. In that year we only discover one of those numerous events, which marked the progress of a Revolution, whose springs may be traced to an earlier origin, but which from the beginning of the last century was more distinguishable in its effects. Mr. *Burke* has reprobated those who would confound the Revolution in 1688 with what he calls a Revolution near half a century earlier. He must indeed be a despicable politician who can separate them in their nature and principles. He who considers the occurrences of

1688 were insulated facts, underived from, and anomalous to, the series of preceeding events, must trample on our history, or disregard the nature and consequences of human action. Motives may, indeed, exist for wishing to mark with abhorrence important events in the progress of a Revolution, while we load with applause concluding ones, though composing a part of the same series, and participating in one general nature.

When the French shall have gone through their revolutionary progress, those who may then be in possession of power, may wish to consign to oblivion, or involve in censure, those acts of their predecessors, to which they themselves may be indebted for the power they possess, and the happiness they enjoy. In *England* our conduct is peculiarly whimsical. We have, for above a century, been branding as execrable regicides those who deprived one of our Monarchs of his Crown and life, while we load with the most extravagant applause those who possessed the throne of his successors accompanied with circumstances which would have rendered *regicidism* a mercy. Have those who are so loud in their execration of the cruelties exercised towards *Charles I.* and *Louis XVI.* by their enraged subjects, none to bestow on those endured by *James II.* from his own *Children*? Were his wounds less painful because inflicted not merely by *Children*, but by Children whom he had *loved* and *indulged* with a tenderness which rarely finds place in a royal breast.

He not merely abandoned his palace, and flew from kingdom to kingdom under the terror of him, on whom he had bestowed a beloved daughter; but he beheld his Queen, who had left, a soft and genial climate to share his throne in an inclement island, necessitated to escape from his palace under the terror of assassination, and shrouded in the darkness of the night, with the new born infant at her breast, exposed to a tempestuous winter sky, the pitiless storm beating on their devoted heads, until means were obtained for their safety, in flight from our barbarous land.

AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN,
ON THE PROPRIETY OF ABSTAINING FROM
West India Sugar and Rum.

*Why did all-creating Nature,
Make the plant for which we toil!
Sighs must fan it, Tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the Soil.
Think ye Masters, iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial Boards,
Think how many Backs have smarted
For the sweets your Cane affords?*

COWPER'S Negro's Complaint.

THE TWELFTH EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

Sold by M. Gurney, No. 128, Holborn-Hill, T. Knott, No. 47,
Lombard-Street, and C. Forster, No. 41, Poultry. 1791.

[Price a HALFPENNY.]

Or twenty-five for 1s. and 3s. 9d per hundred.

40,000 of this Pamphlet having been printed in about 4 months affords the most flattering hopes of the plan proposed being extensively adopted and producing very important effects : to further them a trivial price is affixed, that those who approve the Pamphlet may be more generally enabled to promote its circulation ; this may be done in the most inconsiderable town or village in the kingdom if there be in it only one friend to the Cause, who will send a letter (post-paid) to M. Gurney, No. 128, Holborn, directing to whom the parcel is to be delivered, and ordering the Coachman, Waggoner, or other person to pay the money on delivery ; the deduction abovementioned will in most cases enable the person to dispose of them at a halfpenny, without any loss.

NOtwithstanding the late determination of the House of Commons on the Slave Trade, we may hope that the discussion it has received will not be useless; and that the public attention has not been excited in vain, to a system of cruelty which it is painful even to recite. It may be hoped that, claiming for ourselves the most perfect freedom, we shall no longer impose upon others a slavery the most oppressive; and that, enjoying a degree of felicity unequalled in any age or country, we shall no longer range the world to increase the misery of mankind.

The lust of power, and the pride of conquest, have doubtless produced instances far too numerous, of man enslaved by man. But we, in an enlightened age, have greatly surpassed, in brutality and injustice, the most ignorant and barbarous ages: and while we are pretending to the finest feelings of humanity, are exercising unprecedented cruelty. We have planted slavery in the rank soil of sordid avarice; and the produce has been misery in the extreme. We have ascertained, by a course of experiments in cruelty, the least portion of nourishment requisite to enable man to linger a few years in misery; the greatest quantity of labour which, in such a situation, the extreme of punishment can extort; and the utmost degree of pain, labour, and hunger united, that the human frame can endure.

In vain have such scenes been developed. The wealth derived from the horrid traffic, has created an influence that secures its continuance; unless the people at large shall refuse to receive the produce of robbery and murder.

The Legislature having refused to interpose, the people are now necessarily called on, either to reprobate or approve the measure; for West-India Slavery must depend upon their support for its existence, and it is in the power of every individual to increase, or to diminish its extent. The laws of our country may indeed prohibit us the sugar-cane, unless we will receive it through the medium of slavery. They may hold it to our lips, steeped in the blood of our fellow-creatures; but they cannot compel us to accept the loathsome potion. With us it rests, either to receive it and be partners in the crime, or to exonerate ourselves from guilt, by spurning from us the temptation. For let us not think, that the crime rests alone with those who conduct the traffic, or the legislature by which it is protected. If we purchase the commodity we participate in the crime. The slave-dealer, the slave holder, and the slave-driver, are vir-

ually the agents of the consumer, and may be considered as employed and hired by him to procure the commodity. For, by holding out the temptation, he is the original cause, the first mover in the horrid process; and every distinction is done away by the moral maxim, That whatever we do by another, we do ourselves.

Nor are we by any means warranted to consider our individual share in producing these evils in a trivial point of view. The consumption of sugar in tea, wines, pastry and punch by many families in this country is so considerable, that a few such families by abstaining, will have an important effect on the Slave Trade, the colonial slavery, and even on the other European markets, where the consumption of sugar is comparatively inconsiderable, because those articles which occasion the consumption of sugar in this country, are on the Continent very little used. A family that uses 5lb. of sugar per week, with the proportion of rum, will, by abstaining from the consumption 21 months, prevent the slavery or murder of one fellow-creature; eight such families in 19½ years, prevent the slavery or murder of 100, and when the sugar trade shall have returned to its former channel by the French Colonies supplying the other European markets, 38,000 such families will have it in their power totally to prevent the Slave Trade to supply our islands. Nay, so necessarily connected are our consumption of the commodity, and the misery resulting from it, that in every pound of sugar used, (the produce of slaves imported from Africa) we may be considered as consuming two ounces of human flesh, besides destroying an alarming number of seamen by the Slave-Trade, and spreading inconceivable anguish, terror, and dismay, through an immense Continent, by the burning of their villages, tearing parents from their families, and children from their parents; breaking every bond of society, and destroying every source of human happiness. A French writer observes, "That he cannot look on a piece of sugar without conceiving it stained with spots of human blood:" and Dr. Franklin adds, that had he taken in all the consequences, "he might have seen the sugar not merely spotted, but thoroughly died in grain." Dreadful consideration, that our increasing prosperity has spread desolation over a country as large as all Europe! For it is an indisputable fact, that it is British luxury, the

African Slave Trade depends on for support : they have increased, and they would fall together. For our consumption of sugar is now so immense that it nearly equals that of all Europe besides : and Jamaica now supplies more than all our West-India Islands did at any period prior to 1755.

But amazingly extensive as is the increase of the culture, so far is it from keeping pace with our luxury, that (before the disturbances in the French Islands, within these two or three years) sugars have ever sold in the British market 20 or 30, sometimes 50 per cent. dearer than in any other part of the world. Nor is it to support the old plantations, as is pretended, but to form new ones, for the supply of this our increasing luxury, that the wretched Africans are torn from their native land.

Let us then imagine our immense consumption wholly, or in great part to cease, and our sugars to be thrown on the foreign markets ; would additional slaves be wanted to supply an overflowing market at a falling price ? No : the African Slave Trade, by whomsoever conducted, to supply sugar colonies, by whatever nation possessed, must totally cease. Horror and dismay would give place to peace and civilization through a coast of above three thousand miles extent, and above a thousand miles inland : for so extensive are our depredations, and so extensive are the benefits which it is in our power to confer. Nor would the beneficial effects cease, even here. The West-India islands, finding less demand for sugar, must appropriate less ground to the sugar-cane, and leave more for provisions : the slaves would be less worked, better fed, and in a few years consist entirely of native Creoles. Or if the planters appropriate the land to the other productions of the islands, the same beneficial effects must ensue. For Mr. Cooke tells us, "the cultivation of cotton, pimento, and coffee, is easier than sugar ; the Slaves look better, and increase faster : " and instead of requiring additional slaves, they would be able to increase their plantations with those already in the Islands. For Governor Parry says, "one acre of sugar requires as much labour as three of cotton." Thus our refraining from the consumption of the sugar-cane, even for a few years, would destroy the Slave Trade to the West-India Islands, bring fresh land into culture, and place the slaves in such a situation, that they must rapidly increase.

The diminution of the consumption of West-India pro-

duce, would also have a powerful effect by sinking the price of the commodity; and thereby take away the temptation to import additional slaves. The reverse we have recently experienced, by the disturbances in the French sugar islands, having suddenly raised some of the markets, which were 20 or 30 per cent. lower than the British, much above it; and thereby occasioned an exportation from this country to supply the deficiency: and our exportation, though only amounting to a 10th of our importation, has raised our sugars 50 per cent. And as a fall in the price would obstruct the Slave Trade, and meliorate the condition of the slaves; so this rise will produce effects the most baneful. The planter, tempted by the high price to get sugar and rum to market while that high price continues, will deprive his slaves of their provision grounds, to plant them with canes; and by the energy of the whip, they will be forced to the most extreme exertions. The murder, or, in the technical language of the West Indies, the *loss* of his slaves, will be to him but a secondary consideration. The large crop, and the high price, will amply compensate him: and the question now is, not merely whether we shall hold out to him an inducement to purchase additional slaves; but whether we shall tempt him to murder those he already has. We can hardly doubt, but that West-India packets have already borne the murderous dispatches, expressed in language too dreadfully explicit, and to the following effect. "The price of sugar and rum still continues high. You must adopt every mode to forward as large a cargo as possible. A fortunate crisis now offers itself for extricating my estate from the difficulties in which it is involved. We must avail ourselves of it, another may never occur. Consequences, though disagreeable, must at the present moment be overlooked. The slave market is still open for a supply. *New-fangled humanity is no more.*" The day hardly dawns when the whip resounds through those regions of horror; nor ceases, till darkness closes the scene, which day after day is renewed. The miserable victims, destitute of every source of comfort to body or to mind, and sinking under the three endemic diseases of our islands, hunger, torture, and extreme labour; and urged to exertions they are unable to sustain, at length expire beneath the lash, which in vain endeavours to rouse them to a renewal of their labour.

If such be the dreadful situation of the West-India slaves, may it not be asked, on what principle we can receive that produce which occasions it, for as neither the slave-dealer, nor the planter, can have any moral right to the person of him they stile their slave, to his labour, or to the produce of it; so they can convey no right in that produce to us: and whatever number of hands it may pass through, if the criminal circumstances appertaining to it be known at the time of the transfer, they can only have a criminal possession: and the money paid, either for the slave, or for the produce of his labour, is paid to obtain that criminal possession; and can confer no moral right whatever. So, if the death of the person called a slave, be occasioned by the criminal possession, the criminal possessor is guilty of murder; and we, who have knowingly done any act which might occasion his being in that situation, are accessaries to the murder, as by receiving the produce of his labour, we are accessaries to the robbery.

If we, as individuals concerned in the Slave Trade (either by procuring the slaves, compelling them to labour, or receiving the produce) imagine that our share in the transaction is so minute that it cannot perceptibly increase the injury; let us recollect that, though numbers partaking of a crime may diminish the shame, they cannot diminish its turpitude. Can we suppose, that an injury of enormous magnitude can take place, and the criminality be destroyed merely by the criminals becoming so numerous as to render their respective shares indistinguishable? Were an hundred assassins to plunge their daggers into their victim, though each might plead, that without his assistance the crime would have been completed, and that his poinard neither occasioned nor accelerated the murder, yet every one of them would be guilty of the entire crime. For into how many parts soever a criminal action may be divided, the crime itself rests intire and compleat on every perpetrator.

But waving these considerations, and even supposing for a moment, that the evil has an existence from causes totally independent of us: yet surely it will not be said, that we are to bind up no wounds but those we have inflicted, nor relieve any distrest but what we have occasioned; if dreadful misery exists, and we have it in our power jointly with others, to remedy it; it is undoubtedly our duty to contribute our share, in hopes that others will

theirs; and to act from conscience, as we should from inclination in similar cases that interested our feelings.

For instance; let us suppose the Algerines to establish sugar plantations, and resort to the banks of the Thames for slaves, as the only place to be insulted with impunity. Suppose our wives, our husbands, our children, our parents, our brethren, swept away, and the fruit of their labour, produced with agonizing hearts and trembling limbs, landed at the port of London. What would be our conduct? Should we say, sugar is a necessary of life: I cannot do without it. Besides, the quantity I use is but a small proportion: and though it be very criminal of the Algerines to enslave others, yet I am not bound to look to the nature or consequences of the transaction; and paying for the sugar, I have a right to consume it, however it may have been obtained. If such would be our language in that case, be it so on the present occasion. For let us recollect, that the only difference is, that in one case our relation to the enslaved is rather more remote, but that in both cases they are our brethren.

But it is hardly requisite to state so strong a case as that supposed. For were only one Englishman to receive injuries, that bore but the slightest resemblance to those daily committed in our islands, the nation would be inflamed with resentment, and clamorous to avenge the injury. And can our pride suggest to us, that the rights of men are limited to any nation, or to any colour? Or, were any one to treat a fellow creature in this country as we do the unhappy Africans in the West-Indies; struck with horror, we should be zealous to deliver the oppressed, and punish the oppressor. Are then the offices of humanity and functions of justice to be circumscribed by geographical boundaries? Can reason, can conscience justify this contrast in our conduct, between our promptitude, in the one case, and our torpor in the other?—Mr. Addison justly observes, that “humanity to become estimable must be combined with justice.” But we seem to act as if we thought that the relief of our fellow-creatures, protection from injuries, communication of benefits, were works of supererogation, to be granted or withheld, as caprice, or custom, or inclination may suggest.

After the important considerations adduced, it might be reckoned a degradation of the subject to mention the na-

tional dignity; or even that might induce us to counteract a powerful body of men, who are trampling under foot, the dictates of humanity, and the interest of the nation: men who have in 50 years received for sugar alone, above 70 millions more than it would have cost at any other market. And from Mr. Botham's evidence it appears, that in Batavia, where labour is as high as in England, sugar, equal to the best West-India, is sold at 1d $\frac{1}{2}$ per pound. These are the men, who are at this moment summoning meetings to compel the minister to aid the operation of their whips by the terrors of our bayonets; and to pervert the public treasure for the purpose of supporting a few individuals in violating every principle of law and justice, and of defending them in the exercise of the most dreadful tyranny over half a million of persons, born in islands, which, when it serves their purpose they pretend to be ours, but of which they have in fact usurped the absolute sovereignty. These men are now also endeavouring to overthrow a plan for supplying us with sugars, by means of free labour; and have the audacity to tell the British legislature, "That they cannot abolish the slave trade; for that if England refuses to furnish them with slaves, they will obtain a supply through other channels." And a governor of Barbadoes admonishes us, "From policy, to leave the Islands to the quiet management of their own affairs. These nominal colonies have, it seems, been taught, that we have no right to controul them; that the acts of their Assemblies alone are obligatory; and that those of British legislators, are binding only on those whom they represent. The right of enslaving others, they contend for, as the most valuable of their privileges.

Thus it appears, that the legislature is not only unwilling, but perhaps unable to grant redress; and therefore it is more peculiarly incumbent on us, *To abstain from the use of sugar and rum, until our West-India Planters themselves have prohibited the importation of additional slaves, and commented as speedy and effectual a subversion of slavery in their islands, as the circumstances and situation of the slaves will admit: or till we can obtain the produce of the sugar cane in some other mode, unconnected with slavery, and unpolluted with blood.*

For surely it may be hoped that we shall not limit our views merely to the abolition of the African slave trade, as

the colonial slavery formed on it, is in its principle equally unjust. For if it be iniquitous to force the Africans from their native land; equally iniquitous must it be, to retain them and their posterity in perpetual bondage. And though the African slave trade be the most prominent feature in this wickedness, yet it is but a feature: and were it abolished, the West India slavery would still exist. And shall we suffer half a million of fellow subjects, and their posterity, to be held in slavery for ever? I say, fellow subjects, For undoubtedly, every person born in the dominions of Great Britain is a subject, bound to obey and entitled to the protection of the common law of England; and in opposition to which, the acts of assemblies, existing merely by grant from the crown, can be of no authority.

In demanding liberty then for the persons called slaves in our Islands, we demand no more than they are entitled to by the common law of the land. The most eligible mode of putting them in possession of their legal and natural right, may be a question of difficulty; but it is a question that ought to be considered with no other view, but to their happiness. The plan to be adopted, ought to be certain and speedy in its operation; should it even militate against the supposed, or even real interest, of their oppressors; and let it be remembered, that it is in the power of a small proportion of the people of England to effect it, by refusing to receive the produce. For the planters themselves would adopt the plan, were that the only condition on which we would consume the sugar of their islands: nor would the Legislature be then harassed with preposterous claims for compensation; which, however unfounded in justice or reason, will be supported by influence, and enforced with clamour.]

The case now fully lies before us; and we have to make our choice, either to join ourselves with these manufacturers of human woe, or to renounce the horrid association. If we adopt the former, let us at least have the candour to avow our conduct in its real deformity. Let us no longer affect to deplore the calamities attendant on the Slave Trade, of which we are the primary cause: nor let us pretend to execrate the conduct of the slave-dealer, the slave-holder, or the slave-driver; but apologize for them as our partners in iniquity; and be assured, that if we now take *our* share in the transaction, we should, were we placed

in a similar situation with them, with as little compunction take *theirs*; unless we can suppose the order of nature would be so far inverted, as that we should become virtuous, in proportion as the temptation to vice increased. Nor should we then, any more than now, be destitute of subterfuges to destroy the feelings of our minds, and the convictions of our consciences.

If ignorance and inattention may be pleaded as our excuse hitherto, yet that can be the case no longer. The subject has been four years before the public. Its dreadful wickedness has been fully proved. Every fallhood, every deception with which it has been disguised, has been completely done away; and it stands before us in all its native horrors. No longer can it be pretended, that Africa is a barbarous, uncultivated land, inhabited by a race of savages, inferior to the rest of the human species. Mr. How, who was employed by government to go up the country, deposes, that inland it is every where well cultivated, abounding with rice, millet, potatoes, cotton and indigo plantations; and that the inhabitants are quick in learning languages, and remarkably industrious, hospitable and obliging. It appears that they possess noble and heroic minds, disdaining slavery, and frequently seeking refuge from it in the arms of death. Nor shall we again be told, of the superior happiness they enjoy under the benevolent care of the planters; Mr. Coor having deposed, that "setting slaves to work in the morning, is attended with loud peals of whipping;"—and General Toutenham, "that there is no comparison between regimental flogging, which only cuts the skin, and the plantation, which cuts out the flesh;"—Capt. Hall, "that the punishments are very shocking, much more so than in men of war;" Capt. Smith, "that at every stroke of the whip a piece of flesh is cut out,"—And Mr. Ross, "that he considers a comparison between West-India slaves, and the British peasantry, as an insult to common sense."

We are now called on to redress evils, in comparison with which, all that exist in this nation sink beneath our notice; and the only sacrifice we are required to make in order to effect it, is the abandoning a luxury, which habit alone can have rendered of importance, a luxury to which the industrious bee labours to supply an excellent succedaneum. If we refuse to listen to the admonitions of

conscience on this occasion. May it not be justly inferred, that those numerous displays of humanity, of which this kingdom boasts, have not their foundation in any virtuous or valuable principle: but that to custom and ostentation they owe their origin? And if our execration of the slave trade be any more than mere declamation against crimes we are not in a situation to commit, we shall, instead of being solicitous to find despicable distinctions to justify our conduct, abhor the idea of contributing in the least degree, to such scenes of misery.

If these be the deductions from the most obvious principles of reason, justice or humanity; what must be the result if we extend our views to religious considerations? It will hardly be said, that we assume a religious profession to diminish the extent of our moral duties, or to weaken the force of our obligation to observe them.

May we not then ask, if we mean to insult the God we pretend to worship, by supplicating him to "have mercy upon all prisoners and captives," and to "defend and provide for the fatherless, widows, and children, and all that are desolate and oppressed." But, if the dissenters suppose a national religion to be only matter of form, we may expect that they will think it at the least, as requisite to dissent from the national crimes, as the national religion; unless they mean to prove they have consciences of so peculiar a texture, as to take offence at the religion of their country, while they can conform without scruple to its most criminal practices. If indeed they are satisfied, after an impartial examination, that the traffic alluded to is fair and honest, and that the produce ought to be considered as the result of lawful commerce, it will become them to encourage it; it will become them to reprobate this work as an attempt to slander honest men, and to injure their property, by holding it out to the public, as the produce of robbery and murder. But, if the arguments be valid, will they still treat the subject with cool indifference, and continue a criminal practice? May we not also hope that the Methodists, who appear to feel forcibly their principles, will seriously consider it? They are so numerous, as to be able of themselves to destroy that dreadful traffic, which is the sole obstacle to their ministers spreading the gospel in the extensive continent of Africa; and, however others may affect to degrade the Negroes, they are bound to con-

Other thousands of them, not merely as their fellow creatures, but as their brethren in Christ.

But there is one class of dissenters who justly stand high in the public estimation, for their steady, manly and uniform opposition to our colonial slavery. And can it be supposed that, after having awakened the public attention, they can refuse to contribute what is in their own power to remedy the evil? The plan proposed, is a plain and obvious deduction from their uniform principle of having no concern in what they disapprove. Thus, considering war as unlawful, they consider goods obtained through that medium as criminally obtained; and will not suffer any of their members to purchase prize-goods: and surely they must consider the seizure of a man's goods, as a crime far inferior to the seizing of his person.

But however obvious a duty may be, yet the mind when hardened by habit, admits with difficulty the conviction of guilt; and when our conduct is sanctioned by common practice, we may commit the grossest violations of duty without remorse. It is therefore more peculiarly incumbent on us in such situations, to examine our conduct with the utmost suspicion, and to fortify our minds with moral principles or the sanctions of religion. In proportion as we are under their influence, we shall rejoice that it is in our power to diminish those dreadful calamities, recollecting that their removal rests not with the exertions of wealth, of rank, or of power: even in the peaceful hamlet, and sequestered cot we may find the source of Africa's wrongs, and to them we look for their redress. And surely we may look with hope, that the standard of the oppressed being raised, the wise and the good will form a phalanx round it that shall make the abettors of oppression tremble: and let us exert ourselves (to the utmost in our respective situations, to rescue from oppression and misery the injured Africans and their unhappy offspring in our islands, considering that our exertions are not to be judged of merely by their immediate effects, but that they may produce remote ones of which we can form no estimate; but which, after having done our duty, we must leave to *Him who governs all things after the counsel of his own will.* F I N I S.

Published by the Author, a Summary View of the Evidence relating to the Slave Trade and our Colonial Slavery, Price 1d, or 7 for 6d, 50 for 3s 3d and 6s 4d per 100

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